TESTS: Harley-Davidson XLS Roadster, Honda VT750 Shadow, Yamaha XV920 Virago, Honda CR125R

APRIL 1983
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CYCLE GUIDE

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Equalean: Sidecar Pizzazz With a Different Slant

U.S.A. vs. JAPAN:

WHO MAKES THE BEST VEE-TWIN FOR AMERICA?

Harley-Davidson Roadster

Honda Shadow

Yamaha Virago

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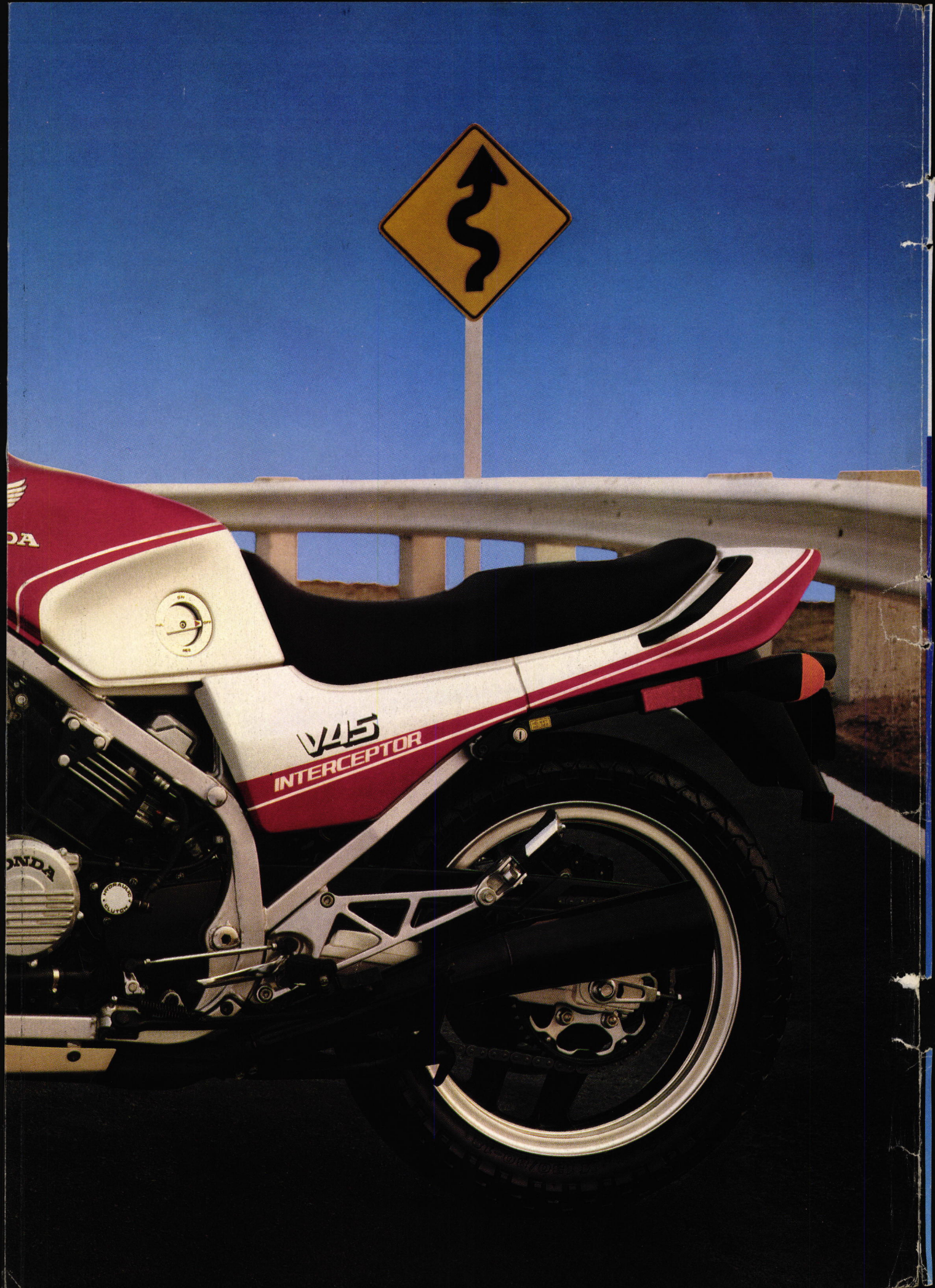
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Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact.

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.2	5
Honda CR125R-'83	April '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/12.3	193	27.2/4.1	6
Honda CR250R-'83	February '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.2	217	26.8/4.0	5
Honda CR480R-'82	April '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.0	232	27.2/4.2	4
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.5	6
Husqvarna 250WR-'82	June '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.6/10.7	236	30.0/6.0	6
Husqvarna 430CR-'82	July '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.0	232	30.5/6.0	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'82	October '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.0	239	30.5/6.0	4
Kawasaki KDX175-'82	September '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	9.6/10.5	227	28.0/4.7	6
Kawasaki KX125-'82	November '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/11.4	200	28.0/4.8	6
Kawasaki KX250-'82	May '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/11.3	220	30.0/5.1	5
KTM 495 MC-'82	July '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.1	247	27.5/4.8	5
Maico Alpha 1 490-'82	July '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/11.5	248	28.5/5.0	5
Maico 490 E-'83	December '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.9/12.6	261	27.5/4.6	5
Suzuki DR250-'82	December '82	Trail	Four-stroke	9.7/10.3	259	28.2/4.6	5
Suzuki PE175-'82	September '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/9.8	229	28.0/4.4	6
Suzuki RM125-'82	November '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.6	197	29.5/4.8	6
Suzuki RM250-'83	February '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.7/12.4	219	29.7/4.8	5
Suzuki RM465-'82	April '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.8/12.0	234	29.3/4.8	4
Yamaha IT175-'82	August '82	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.2/11.2	216	28.5/4.9	6
Yamaha YZ250-'83	March '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.3	217	28.0/4.7	5
Yamaha YZ490-'82	April '82	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.8	238	28.5/4.7	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R65 LS-'82	April '82	2C/G	649.6	14.15/92.4	110	417	35-50	138
BMW R80 G/S-'81	November '81	2C/G	797.5	14.07/92.3	105	405	36-54	NA
BMW R100RT-'82	May '82	2C/G	979.9	13.86/95.1	122	523	35-50	148
H-D FLH Classic-'82	August '82	45-deg. 2D/F	1338.6	15.47/82.0	101	752	32-42	180
H-D FXRS-'82	December '81	45-deg. 2D/F	1338.6	13.92/93.1	109	594	40-47	124
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45-deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.84/93.9	106	515	43-55	138
Honda CBX400F-'82	October '82	4A/F	399.1	13.59/96.5	110	402	34-58	128
Honda CB650SC Nighthawk-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.28/108.0	122	451	28-51	128
Honda CB750F-'81	June '81	4A/F	748.7	12.40/108.3	118	526	38-53	126
Honda CB900F-'81	July '81	4A/F	901.8	12.21/111.1	141	547	41-47	130
Honda CB1100F-'83	January '83	4A/F	1062.2	11.22/119.8	144	550	33-46	144
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80-deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.09/111.7	137	538	25-44	124
Honda FT500 Ascot-'82	August '82	1B/F	497.7	14.92/83.7	97	360	47-54	146
Honda GL500 Interstate-'81	August '81	80-deg. 2E/G	496.9	14.88/86.4	96	517	39-53	140
Honda GL1100-'81	April '82	4C/G	1085.0	12.60/106.5	139	606	41-49	NA
Honda GL1100A Aspencade-'83	February '83	4C/G	1085.0	13.51/96.0	152	752	32-46	131
Honda GL1100I Interstate-'82	April '82	4C/G	1085.0	13.30/99.5	139	697	40-50	NA
Honda Nighthawk 750-'82	March '82	4A/F	748.7	12.74/103.8	131	543	36-49	128
Honda V45 Magna-'82	June '82	90-deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.34/105.9	129	507	30-46	124
Honda V45 Sabre-'82	June '82	90-deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.37/106.8	128	511	29-47	149
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45-deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.91/100.8	127	484	48-55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'82	November '82	4A/F	553.8	13.20/99.6	132	437	43-61	132
Kawasaki GPz750-'83	February '83	4A/F	739.0	12.16/109.2	134	498	35-51	136
Kawasaki GPz1100-'82	May '82	4A/F	1089.9	11.33/119.4	137	534	35-48	127
Kawasaki KZ750-L3-'83	January '83	4A/F	739.0	12.09/108.6	134	487	47-53	132
Kawasaki KX750LTD-'82	December '82	4A/F	739.0	12.56/105.3	131	474	41-55	131
Kawasaki KZ1000R-'82	November '82	4A/F	998.6	11.85/116.7	134	505	35-49	129
Kawasaki KZ1100A-'81	April '81	4A/G	1089.9	11.62/117.6	142	559	38-44	NA
Kawasaki KZ1100 Spectre-'82	March '82	4A/G	1089.9	11.96/110.4	142	553	36-44	132
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.24/93.2	106	384	39-49	131
Suzuki GS450G Automatic-'83	February '83	2A/G	448.2	16.41/82.3	94	410	36-59	143
Suzuki GS550M Katana-'82	August '82	4A/F	549.7	13.69/95.9	120	449	39-53	135
Suzuki GS750E-'82	January '82	4A/F	747.4	12.01/109.1	127	519	34-49	127
Suzuki GS1000S Katana-'81	December '81	4A/F	997.5	11.40/118.7	141	525	33-51	129
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	May '82	4A/F	1074.9	11.20/119.3	141	530	37-49	132
Suzuki GS1100G-'82	September '82	4A/G	1074.9	11.92/114.2	137	555	42-48	138
Suzuki GS1100GK-'82	October '82	4A/F	1074.9	12.58/104.5	137	647	31-44	155
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.38/107.1	132	521	34-46	120
Yamaha XS400 Seca-'82	December '82	2A/F	399.4	14.50/89.2	110	382	47-57	140
Yamaha 750 Seca-'81	June '81	4A/G	748.6	12.26/108.0	128	495	44-56	134
Yamaha XJ650 Seca-'82	September '82	4A/G	653.4	12.83/103.4	125	469	44-59	135
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	653.4	13.06/103.3	126	543	35-53	126
Yamaha XS400 Maxim-'82	November '82	2A/F	399.4	14.65/89.3	104	376	52-61	136
Yamaha 750 Virago-'82	January '82	75-deg. 2D/G	748.8	13.28/99.8	105	481	43-48	132
Yamaha XV920 Virago-'83	April '83	75-deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.84/101.5	108	503	38-45	138
Yamaha XV920R-'83	February '82	75-deg. 2D/F	920.0	13.10/100.4	112	509	37-51	128

*A-Transverse Vertical, B-Vertical (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, F-Chain Final Drive, G-Shaft Final Drive, H-Belt Final Drive

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QUOTE:
"You can't quantify it, no instruments yet made are sensitive enough to measure it, but a vee-twin cruiser exudes a *presence*."
—Pg. 20

ON THE COVER:
Chris Eastman fires the first shot of World War Vee, and the battle has begun. The streets of America are the trenches, American tradition is the weaponry and American motorcyclists are the prize. For front-line coverage, turn to page 20.

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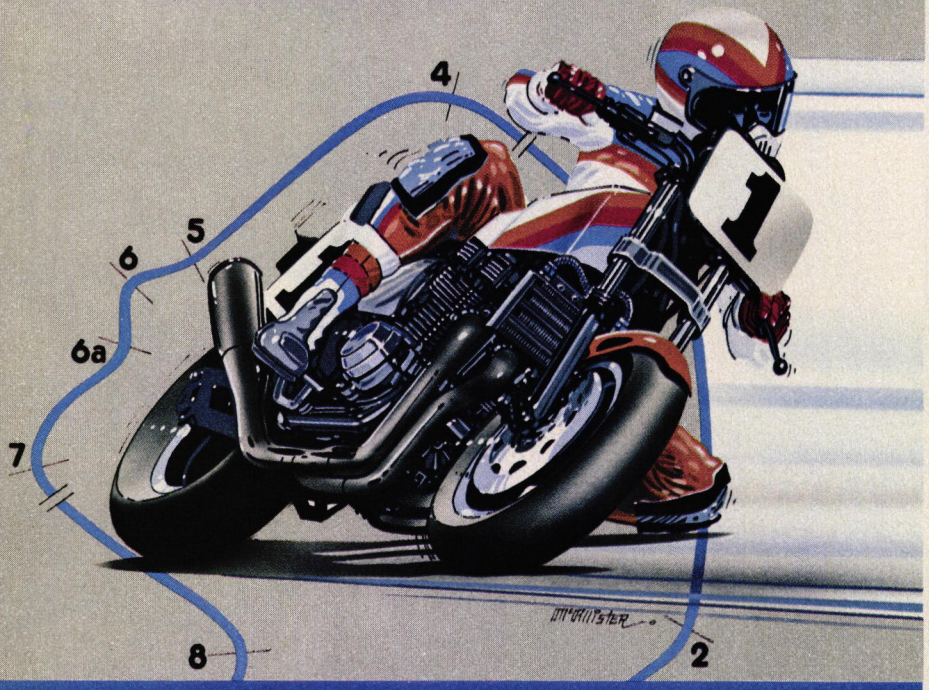

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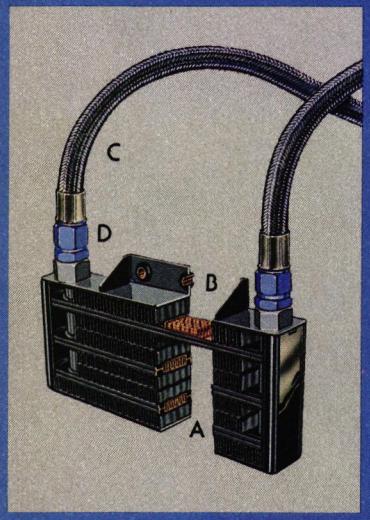

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West's Side

D.H. Lawrence And The Motorcycle

Love and hate are nearly identical—but only one of them leaks oil....

• I hated motorcycles—you *don't know* how I hated motorcycles! So I bought a BMW. Of course.

You have to understand, though, things were different back then. In 1963, there really wasn't much to choose from—if you looked really close, almost nothing at all.

Sure, there were loads of different brand names from loads of different countries, more than there are today.

Yet it didn't make a particle of difference; there just wasn't much to choose from. Of all these various bikes, speaking all their various tongues and following all their various gods, practically every one had some disgusting personal habit that could send a decent college boy like me straight across the street to the used-car lot . . . and *did*.

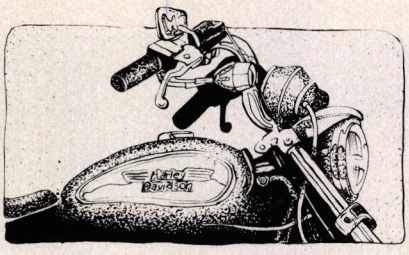
It was sordid, really. There were bikes that coated themselves in their own most intimate bodily fluids—and shamelessly so, right in front of innocent, smiling, 36-double-D college girls in madras wrap-around skirts who wanted to know where you live. There were bikes that suffered regular, violent attacks of carburetorial emphysema—which, like any proper mortal affliction, struck only at the exact moment when it was absolutely imperative that it *not* strike. There were bikes that, like their Italian and English automotive cousins, so dearly beloved of rural towing franchises the world over, were devoted to having sudden and complete electrical cardiac arrest—all it took was someone switching on a sprinkler system or room humidifier three counties away and these darlings were rendered instantly lightless, sparkless, riderless, and as soon as feasible, ownerless.

Not much to choose from. Plenty to hate.

In fact, I'm sure that if you put an ad in the paper in 1963—and maybe offered free coffee—you could get huge numbers of young guys to drive long distances on Saturday night just to sit around and do it together in one place—hate motorcycles.

But, see, it was like hating a really sexy girl. You hated motorcycles because you were too thoroughly intimidated by them to try and get one for yourself.

If you did, you knew full well the nightmares that lay ahead. You'd seen the guy out behind the Sociology building every afternoon. You'd watched him kick-over his BSA for a half-hour like some idiot trying to manually pump an oil well. There was always the black pool under the bike, too. You noticed that the guy had sheepishly taken to parking the bike in exactly the same spot alongside the eucalyptus tree every day, so as not to leave the entire parking lot looking like it'd been blasted with a shotgun-load of Castrol-R.



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You watched him faithfully each and every day, though, your contempt growing by leaps and bounds. You hated this ugly ritual, the hopeless kicking, the sweat-rings on the T-shirt, the necessity of wearing greasy jeans, the dumb-looking boots that seemed certain to be retired one day to the Hod-Carrier's Hall Of Fame.

Then after the depressing half-hour of pre-game hostilities was over and the thing finally fired up—sounding like an M-80 factory burning to the ground—you got well out of sight around the corner of the nearest building. You didn't want to witness the moment when the chain hopped between sprockets as the gearbox came to attention, the engine blapped at you insolently a couple of times as if flipping you the bird, and the filthy heathen rode off down the street like a bad dog after a fire engine.

See, that was the worst part of all. You hated it more than everything else, because it was the one part of this sleazy exercise *you wanted*. And you couldn't have it, not even a whiff of it, unless you owned one of these rattly, leaky, rusty dungballs for yourself. So you hated it with that pure, white-hot passion reserved exclusively for the things you envy most.

That's the way it was in 1963—and if you think it was only that way for wussies and wimps like me, you had to be there. Bikes were different then. You could say, bikes were *lousy* then.

On the other hand, they were all there was. And if you were the kind of guy who hid around the corner of the Sociology building every time a BSA finally croaked to life, then you were also the kind of guy who eventually, inevitably, reluctantly took the final plunge.

To be honest, I can't quite remember how it finally happened to me. I didn't know anyone who owned a bike. I don't think I'd ever even *talked* to anyone who owned a bike. At the same time, however—and it's probably significant—I can clearly remember to this day, 20 years later, each and every bike that used to come to rest in that little corner of the campus parking lot. There weren't many of them, it's true, but that only made each the more vivid in my mind. There was the Beezer, a Triumph with a blue tank and one with a stripped black tank, a pair of Honda 250 Super Hawks, a Ducati (which never *ever* started), a really slick little Yamaha 250 and a really gruesome Honda 250 Dream. There was also an uncharacteristically clean, nearly stock, metallic green-tanked Sportster, and finally, parked down at the far end as if not quite invited to the party, a dour, black, industrial-strength, BMW R60 with an Earles fork.

Well, I can't imagine what possessed me, but one day I was walking past just as the Sportster guy was tying down his books. I said I thought his bike was pretty neat, and he didn't even pull a knife. In fact, he nodded thanks. It was a revelation.

Within weeks, I talked to another biker. This time it was the guy with the BMW. He even smiled. And I'd noticed there wasn't a drop of oil on his bike. I asked him why. "Because it doesn't leak," he said. He kicked its starter once and it ticked-over like a watch. I asked him if that was unusual and he grinned straight through me. "This is a BMW," he replied, in full explanation, then rode off down the street like a semi-bad dog after a semi-slow fire engine.

It set me to thinking. And I had a friend much given to using words like "onomatopoeia" and "didactic," who liked to talk about how D.H. Lawrence believed love and hate weren't really opposites; love and *individuality* were the true opposites, while hate was only frustrated love. Well, within a week of talking to the R60 guy, I was riding home timidly on my very own used R50. I'd never so much as *sat* on a motorcycle before, yet scared as I was, already I saw the truth of Lawrence's belief. Within four blocks, all that hate of motorcycles had already become pure, lifelong love.

—Ted West

Performance! A SuperTwins™ Story.

Power bikes like Dan's championship Kawasaki are what the SuperTwins were built to handle. But they come in all sizes, for 40 HP middleweights and up. Virtually any demanding rider can enjoy the performance, endurance, and safety of SuperTwins.

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Super performance — with great mileage and superb rain handling as a bonus. That's why Dan Hayes, 1981 national WERA endurance champion, spent race after race on a set of the tires that helped him win: new SuperTwins from Conti.

He likes being able to charge down any roads in any weather, at his speed: fast. So much the better because SuperTwins last longer than other "sport" specialty tires.

Dan knows that Conti makes and tests the SuperTwins in Germany. Where there are no speed limits on the Autobahn; lots of hilly, winding roads; and plenty of north European rain.

Here, then, are the new SuperTwins through his eyes — those of the performance-minded rider. Close-up!

Acceleration out of turns is maximized by the aggressive traction shoulder. So Dan can do what he likes — which is gain ground in the curves.

For Dan, **rain handling** is a big factor in racing — that's when Dan has even more of an edge with SuperTwins. Open tread patterns and strategic sipes and dimples squeeze water out of the contact patch.

Since **shoulder blocks** are wide and firm — especially on the rear TK44 — Dan gets extra contact and grip at deep lean angles.

The Supergroove, that extra edge that Conti's carved into the shoulder for last-second control. It's caught Dan at the brink of more than one spill during the racing year.

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The SuperTwins: Born performers, sure to go far.

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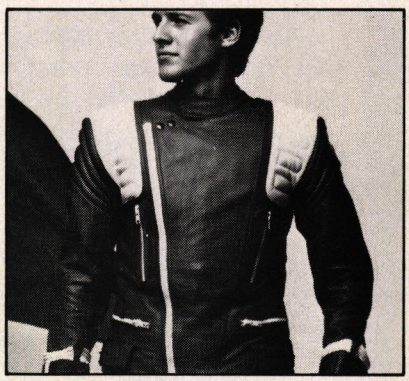
See? Sears doesn't have everything.

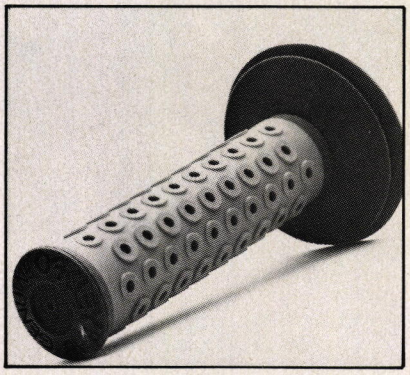
For Faster Feet: No, these Ray boots don't have wings, but the racers who wear them—like Mike Baldwin, Anton Mang, Kork Ballington and others—do fly. The Italian-made boots have top-grain cowhide exteriors and are fully lined with calfskin. Features include ankle padding, an extra layer of leather over the toes, and gas- and oil-resistant soles. Available in combinations of red, white, black, blue and green, and in sizes from 6 through 12, the Ray racing boots have a suggested retail price of $109.95. For more information, contact Quadrifoglio, Dept. CG, 5745 N. 11th St., Phoenix, Arizona 85014.

Tools on Wheels: If you do much wrenching, either for a living or as a pastime, then you know how irritating it is to have to walk from the bike to the toolbox to the workbench and back again. With the Kaddy King B-300 mobile workbench/toolbox, though, you can roll your tools and a work surface right up to the motorcycle. The B-300 measures 24 inches wide, 18 inches deep and 35½ inches high, and can hold up to 1600 pounds. Suggested retail price is $563. To find out more, contact the Guerin-Zimmerman Co., Dept. CG, 8219 Clinton Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44144; (216) 961-5436.



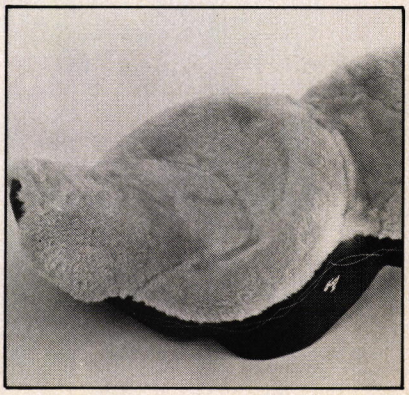
Coats of Many Colors: With Jumbo International's Mega leather jacket, European moto-style can be yours. Made of supersoft leather, the Mega has an adjustable waist, extra padding in the shoulders, elbows and kidney area, a velcro-secured collar and four zippered pockets. There's also an inside pocket and a quilted, insulated lining. The Mega is available in sizes for men and women, in black, white, or black/white, red/black, red/white and blue/white. Suggested retail price is $162.60. For more information, see a motorcycle dealer or contact Slope & Associates, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 5449, Fullerton, California 92635.

Stormy Weather: A smile might be your umbrella, but a Tour Master rainsuit will keep you a lot drier when you're riding in the rain. Tour Master's suit is constructed of heavy-duty, PVC-coated nylon, and all seams are overlapped, glued, double-stitched, heat-sealed and electronically bonded. The front zipper seals with a double-overlay velcro flap and an internal flap. Available colors are black/blue and black/red, and suggested retail price of the suit is $59.95. For more information, write to Tour Master, Dept. CG, 2115 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, California 90404.



Divine Guidance: Not from above, but from Oakley's B-1B Guidance System handlebar grips. The B-1Bs consist of a tough, inner grip-base, a soft outer sleeve and a neoprene flange that is slotted for safety wiring. Bumps on the inner base's surface fit into holes in the outer sleeve and lock the two together; those same bumps allow using the inner base alone as a mud grip. Suggested retail price is $12.50 per pair, and an extra pair of outer sleeves is included. For more information, check a local motorcycle dealer or contact Oakley, Dept. CG, 3 Wrigley Drive, Irvine, California 92174.

Immaculate Sheep: That's the source of virgin wool that Hang 2 Inc. uses on its deep-contour dual saddle for touring riders. The wooly cover is stitched with braided nylon thread, and is fitted over a one-piece, molded polyurethane cushion that's glued and riveted to a metal base. Suggested retail price is $299.95; a matching sheepskin backrest is available for $49.95, rain cover included. For more information, consult motorcycle dealerships or contact Hang 2 Inc., Dept. CG, 1453 Truman St., San Fernando, California 91340; (213) 367-5986.



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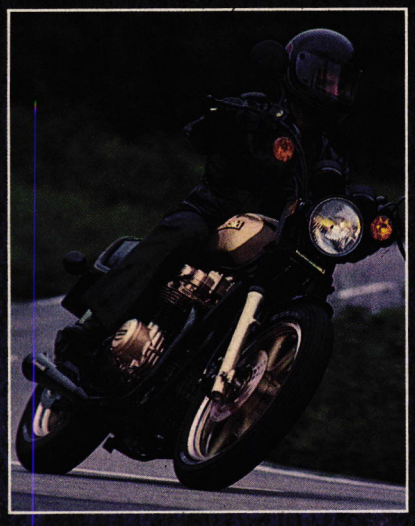

There's absolutely, nothing wrong with buying a motorcycle just because it looks good. As a matter of fact, there's nothing wrong with buying *anything* just because it looks good. You could put a Spectre up on a shelf, pour a little something cold, just look at it, and get your money's worth.

But you'd be missing one of the best rides in motorcycling. A Kawasaki is built to run and run hard. Spectre is no exception. Right in the middle of all that black and gold is something very special. Something that you can only get from Kawasaki.

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The same motor that owns the world of drag racing. 79% of *all* International Drag Bike Association records are held by Kawasaki power. The same motor that owns the world of road racing. Kawasakis win more contingency money, and more trophies in amateur road racing than all other makes combined. And in professional road racing, Kawasaki has won 4 out of 7 AMA Superbike Championships and the last two in a row.

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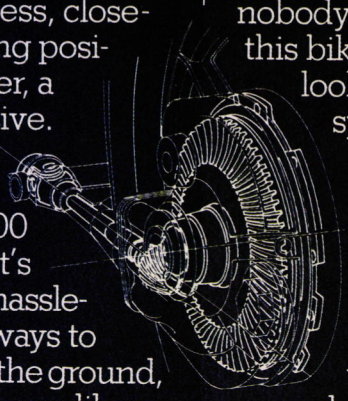
The good mechanical story doesn't stop in the engine room, either. You don't put Kawasaki power through an ordinary clutch, and this one is Kawasaki bulletproof. And the best clutch in the business is backed up by the best gear box in the business, close-ratio and featuring positive neutral finder, a Kawasaki exclusive.

Best of all, every Spectre, 550, 750, and 1100 has shaft drive. It's one of the most hassle-free, long-lived ways to deliver power to the ground, and Kawasaki power likes to travel in style.



THE WRAPPING

Gold fork sliders, black fork boots, custom pullback bars, teardrop tank with special gold-mist paint, dual-density stepped seat, gold anodized alloy wheels, raised white letter Dunlop Qualifier tires, adjustable air suspension front *and* rear, and just so nobody misses the fact that this bike runs as good as it looks, the engine that spells performance, spells it in gold.

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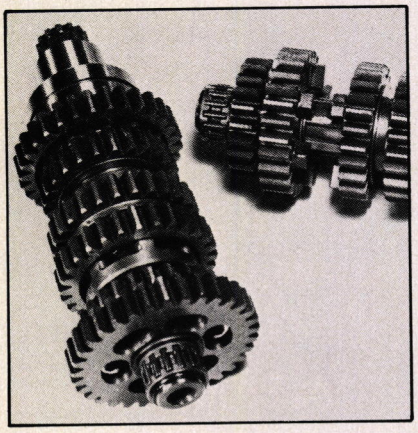
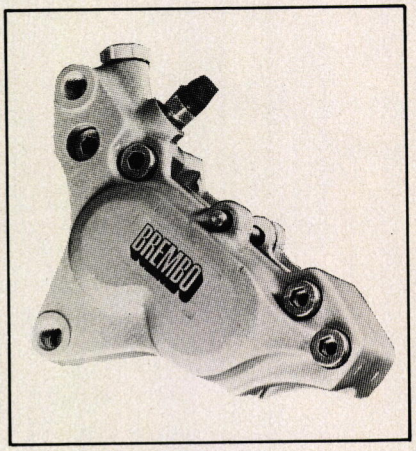
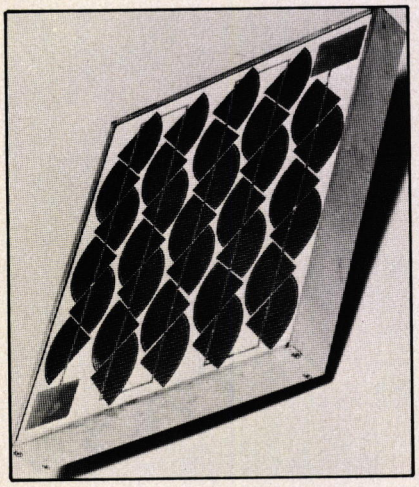
KZ/GPz Sextet: Champion Moriwaki can help you squeeze the last bit of performance from your 550 Kawasaki with this close-ratio six-speed transmission. The Moriwaki gearbox is applicable to both KZ and GPz550s (and, with some modifications, KZ650s and KZ750s as well), and includes all gears assembled on their shafts, ready for installation. Plus, the gears' engagement dogs have been dovetailed for more-positive shifting. Suggested retail price is $573.18. For more information, write or call Champion Moriwaki USA, Dept. CG, 1980 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, California 92627; (714) 642-2040.



Stiffen Up Your Forks: If you're old enough to remember street-scramblers, you probably remember fork braces, too. And while Honda's pre-'83 Gold Wings are no street-scramblers, Markland Industries has fork braces for them, just the same. Markland's Super Brace is die-cast aluminum, with an adjustable center for ease of installation and to preclude fork-binding and sticking. Suggested retail price is $69.95, and models soon will be available for Suzukis, Yamahas, Kawasakis and other Hondas. For more information, write to Markland Industries Inc., Dept CG, 3500 Carriage Drive, Santa Ana, California 92704.

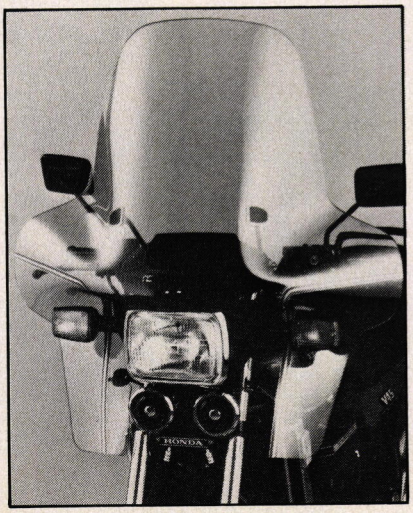
Four-Pot Stopper: Europe's first four-piston caliper for motorcycles now is available on these shores, courtesy of Brembo and Slater Brothers. The magnesium P4F05N caliper was designed specifically to work in the limited interior space of 16-inch wheels. Claimed features include light weight and easy pad removal, and the aluminum pad-backing is said to provide a 50 percent weight reduction compared to other pads. Suggested retail price of the Brembo caliper is $150. For more information, write or call Brembo Brakes, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 746, Kenwood, California 95452; (707) 833-2622.

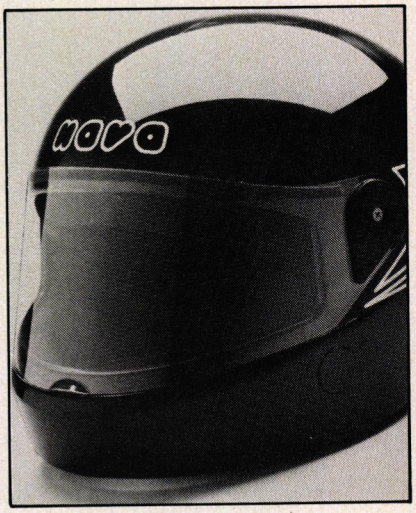




Go Solar: You can thumb your nose at the Power Company—at least while charging your bike's battery—if you're using Arco's M81 solar module. Arco claims the module is designed for trickle-charge applications. The four-pound M81 is rated at seven watts and is powered by 33 series-connected solar cells laminated between a glass front and a metal-foil back, encased in an aluminum frame. Suggested retail price is approximately $200. For more information, write to Arco Solar Inc., Dept. CG, 20554 Plummer St., Chatsworth, California 91311.

Sabre Shield: Sheath your Sabre with National Cycle's new Plexifairing II. Available in both clear and solar tint, the fairing features a handlebar clamp made especially to fit the Sabre's rectangular handlebars. The Plexifairing is claimed to have a unique four-point ball-and-socket mounting system for easy installation and perfect alignment. A Plexifairing model also is offered for the Honda Magna. For more information, contact National Cycle, Dept. CG, 140 S. Seventh Ave., Maywood, Illinois 60153-0158.





New Nava: Last year, Italian helmet manufacturers produced 3.3 million helmets; this year, Nava will add to that number with its GT model. The polycarbonate-shell GT meets both DOT and SHCA specs and comes with a manually operated visor. Available colors are black, white, yellow, red, light blue and dark blue, and sizes range from SM to XXL; suggested retail price is $69.95. For more information, write to Nava USA, Dept. CG, 5729 Ward Ave., Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455.

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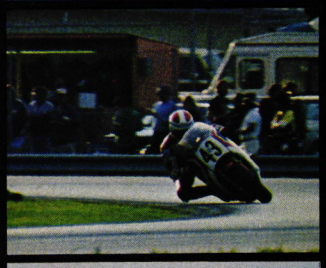

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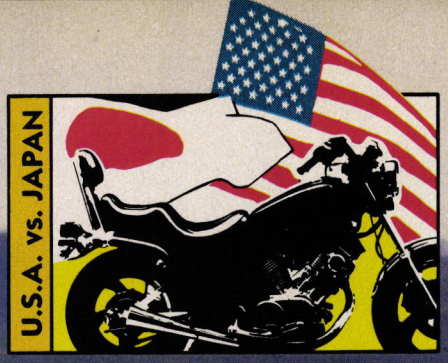
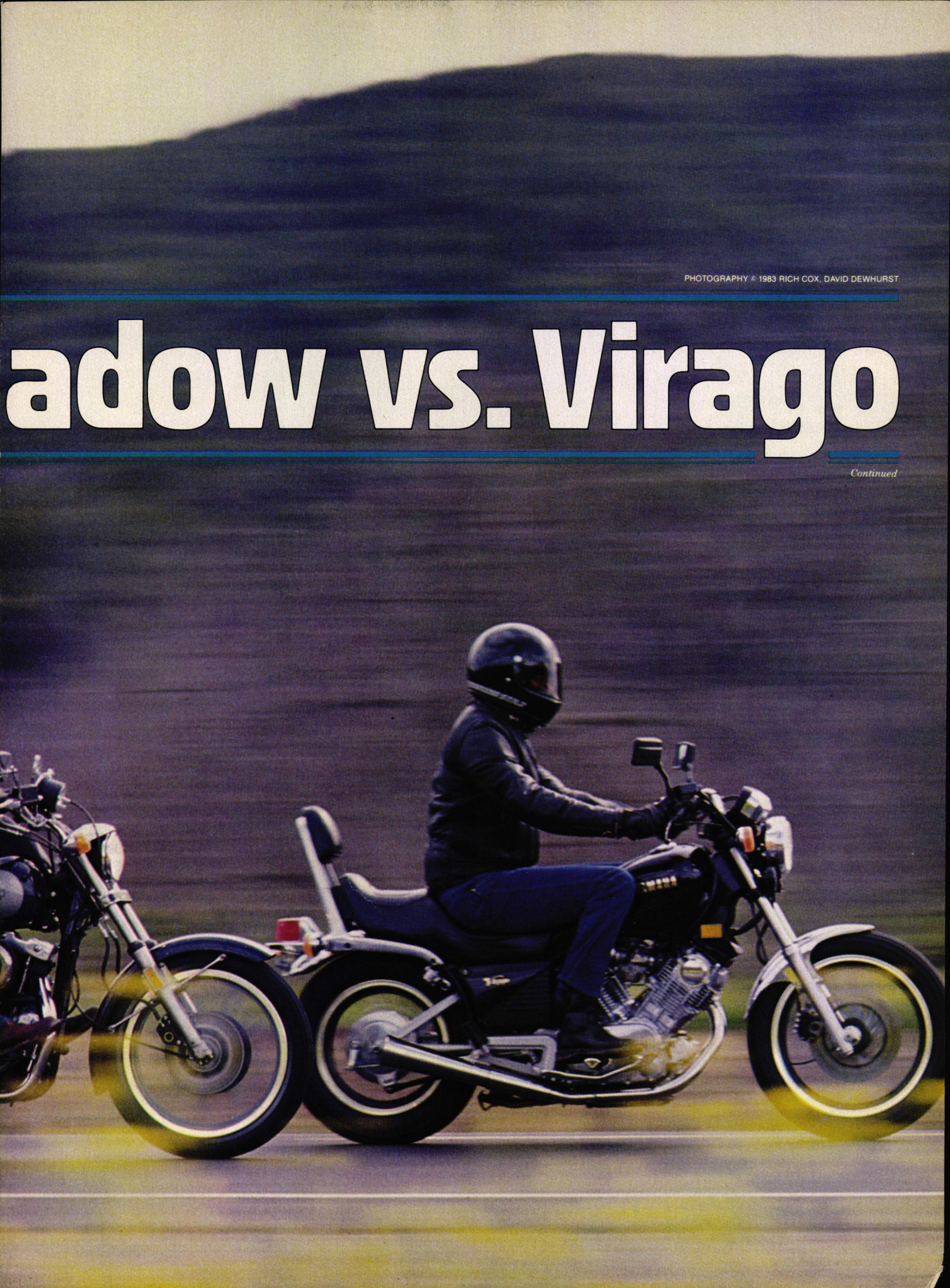


CRUISER CONFRONTATION:

Roadster vs. Sh

In head-to-head urban warfare, the vee-twin owns the boulevard. But whose turf is Main Street—and who's just living on borrowed pavement?

BY LARRY WORKS



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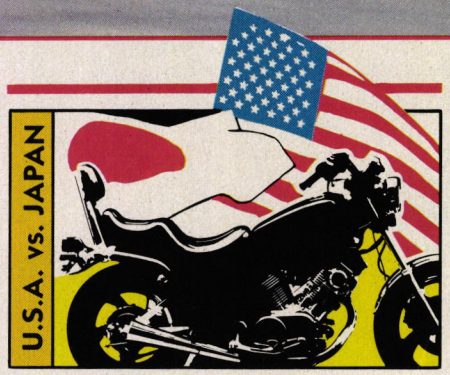
adow vs. Virago

Continued

Hyperkinetic multis might rule the twisties; two-wheeled cargo-haulers might control the highways. But there is one—and only one—kind of motorcycle that owns the boulevard: the tandem vee-twin. And it owns it from one end of town to the other.

So you Main Street riders can just toss in your rearsets and travel trunks right now. Because all the way from Central on down past the bowling alley, you're on vee-twin turf. No other kind of motorcycle delivers the rolling, rumbling exhaust note, the power or the *look* that commands attention in urban cruising. No other machine generates the same raw, tough sensations of motorcycling in America.

Other bikes might accelerate harder, trip the quarter-mile clock quicker and generally out-race a vee-twin. But they'll never match it for sheer appeal. The sight of two splayed cylinders and the gutsy sound of staggered, uneven power pulses cuts a vee-line to the core of the American riding experience. You can't quantify it, no instruments yet made are sensitive enough to measure it, but a vee-twin cruiser exudes a *presence*. Like some emotion-powered missile, it renders other engine configurations weak-kneed by comparison.



Those particular attractions of the big-vee boulevard bomber have been for years the sole property of Harley-Davidson. But no longer. Yamaha wasn't blind to the virtues of a tandem-vee, and introduced its own version, the 750 Virago, in 1981. Then it followed up in 1982 with a larger model, the 920 Virago. This year, with the vee-twin ice not only broken but beginning to melt, Honda followed suit with the 750 Shadow. And vees from three manufacturers, all seemingly built to a similar spec, beg the question: Who makes the best vee-twin for American riding? Does it issue from the drawing boards of Milwaukee, Iwata or Asaka?

It's a burning issue at the moment, what with International Trade Commission hearings and Harley-Davidson complaining that Japanese manufacturers have cut a big, vee-shaped slice out of Harley's share of the motorcycle market. But chauvinism aside, the question remained to be asked. So we asked it.

The choice of players was, in some cases, as knotty as those international trade considerations. In the end, we settled on the Harley XLS Roadster, the Yamaha 920 Virago and, naturally, the 750 Shadow. Harley's Sportster, introduced in 1957 as an update to that firm's existing vee-twin line, represents the newest dose of home-grown cruiser-think. We chose the Roadster version of the Sportster-series as, arguably, the bike the Japanese models were most trying to emulate. The Shadow, with its mean-streets styling, is Honda's biggest vee-twin to date. And the 920 Virago is, by its displacement, closer to the Harley than the Honda. It's a displacement disadvantage for the Shadow, admittedly, but in cruiser-vees, engine capacity and outright performance are not the only measures of excellence. And as we found out, the Honda was anything but lacking in engine

output.

But we also found out that, in evaluating vee-twin boulevardiers, you've got to toss some of the conventional performance parameters out the nearest window; not only do they not apply, they confuse the issue. So much of a tandem vee's goodness rests on its ability to strike a sympathetic response in its rider that the cruiservee is nearly as much a lifestyle appendage as it is a motorcycle. That small bit of license doesn't excuse machine inadequacies, but the sheer emotion generated by a good vee-twin makes it every inch as much a motorcycle as quicker, faster bikes.

While the three vees seem admirably configured for comparison, they are anything but mere cruising clones. In fact, other than that each is powered by a four-stroke vee-twin engine, has the requisite styling licks and rides on two wheels, you probably couldn't pick like motorcycles further apart in execution. Just about every specification shows remarkably different approaches to vee-twin cruising.

The Roadster, the double-dose of tradition in this comparison, saw the problem handled with a 45-degree cylinder-spread, chain final drive, air-cooling, four speeds, three discs and two shocks. Yamaha viewed the goal differently, and went to the streets with a five-speed, air-cooled, 75-degree, shaft-driven vee whose running gear includes a single-disc/drum brake setup and air/damping-adjustable Monoshock rear suspension. And Honda's Shadow, by far the most techno-intensive of the three, addressed the boulevard with a 45-degree, liquid-cooled, six-speed shaftie with double-disc/drum braking, twin shocks and more inbred techno-trickery than you could ever hope to shake a pushrod at.

Urban trolling is the cruiservees' forte—but that doesn't mean they stop dead when they reach city limits.

Both the Harley and the Yamaha are technological known-quantities—the Harley in particular—by virtue of years of production, but in the Shadow lie feats of engineering new to the cruiser genre. In general, the new-think on the Shadow applies to heat, vibration and rear-wheel hop on downshifting. Handling the heat (most apparent in a vee's rear cylinder, since the front cylinder blocks much of the cooling airstream) was as simple in description as applying liquid-cooling. And so, a tall, narrow radiator is mounted to the Shadow's front downtubes, such that from some angles—the view from the saddle in particular—it is out of sight.

Dealing with vee-twin vibration involved some more novel thought. Honda wanted a short engine—presumably to capture the made-in-Milwaukee look—and so chose a 45-degree cylinder-spread. By itself, that choice would have relegated the Shadow to either primary imbalance or the added cost and complexity of counterbalancers. Would have, that is, except for Honda's use of staggered crankpins to replicate the perfectly balanced effect of a 90-degree cylinder-spread (see "Formula Vee," page 28).

A page straight out of Honda's NR500 racebike's manual offers futher proof of the Shadow's techno-density, as well as solving the problem of rear-wheel hop after a hard downshift. Not only is the clutch hydrauli-

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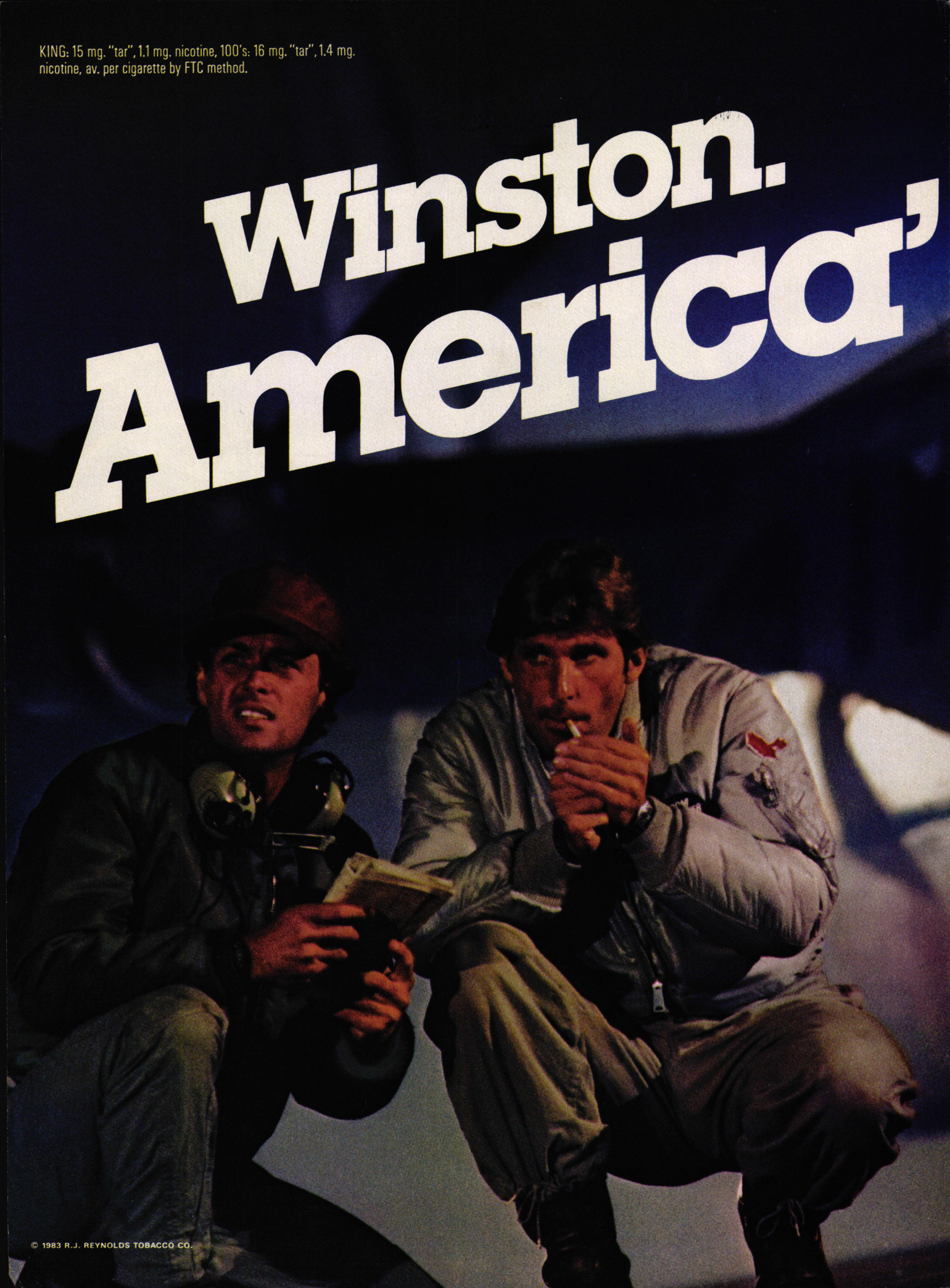

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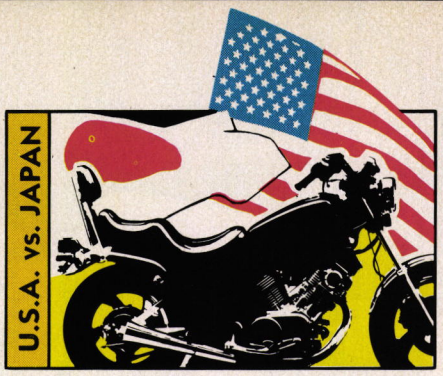


cally actuated (which automatically compensates for wear), but built into the system is a one-way, Sprague-type overrun clutch. In normal riding the system is passive, but during the severe backloading of an abrupt downshift, the overrun unit, which is linked only to the three outer sets of clutch plates, effectively disengages those plates from the gearbox. With only two remaining sets of plates still connecting engine to gearbox, then, the clutch will slip before the rear wheel will break traction during a downshift; hence rear-wheel chatter is eliminated. In practice, the system works perfectly; it's almost impossible to chirp the Shadow's rear tire without deliberately trying to.

More new-to-vee thinking shows up in each of the Shadow's cylinders. Not only do the three-valve heads (two 31mm intake valves, one 40mm exhaust valve) offer better flow than a two-valve configuration, but each combustion chamber has two sparkplugs fired simultaneously by a single ignition coil. Aside from convincing the uninitiated that the Shadow is really a vee-four, the twin-plug setup (one on each side of the head) has loftier goals. Honda claims it offers reduced emissions, up to a 30 percent increase in mileage and a quicker fuel-charge burn for resistance to detonation.

And, as if twin-plug heads, a one-way clutch and the complex juggling act of offset crankpins weren't enough to deflate the notion that these three vees are cast in the same mold, there's more. The Shadow uses zero-clearance hydraulic lash adjusters to keep its valves in constant adjustment. The system is similar in theory, though different in execution, to that used on the CB650 Nighthawk (December 1982 issue). Each valve's rocker arm pivots on its own eccentric shaft, whose position is regulated by a hydraulic lash adjuster. The constant pressure of the adjuster against the eccentric tries to lower the rocker, removing all free-play between cam lobe, rocker and valve, and offsetting normal wear in the valve train.

By now it should be clear that the XLS, Shadow and Virago are three separate views of the One True Vee. Three different ways to employ the same basic concept. But why build a vee in the first place?

Vee-twins offer virtues beyond mere tradition: features like low cg, narrowness and torque, buckets of torque.

Simple: Because the vee-twin makes eminently good sense as a motorcycle powerplant.

In answer to the question of "why," you can ignore claims of design simplicity. Each of the three vees in this comparison is sufficiently complicated to drive that argument into the ground. Call it *apparent* simplicity, if you will, and file it with the rest of the mystique that the vee configuration generates. But beyond that, a vee-twin, even one with the slight cylinder offset of the Honda and Yamaha, is still positively skin and bones by multi standards—nearly as narrow as a thumper. And that thinness across the hips means the engine can be placed low in the frame, yielding a decidedly low center of gravity. And while you're

Continued

Formula Vee: Hardly A Harley Exclusive

• Mention the words "vee-twin" and most motorcyclists instantly have visions of Harley-Davidsons dancing—or maybe a better word is *thundering*—in their heads. It's almost an automatic reaction, as though the vee-twin engine configuration were something owned exclusively by Harley, lock, stock and tandem barrels.

That's not how it is, of course, because scores of other motorcycles have employed vee-twin engines throughout the evolution of the sport, ranging from classic marques like Brough and Indian to contemporary ones like Honda and Yamaha. Vee-twins, in fact, date back to the very dawn of motorcycling. Two cylinders were deemed better than one even then, and putting one behind the other was the most logical arrangement. It allowed an engine that was no wider than a single and had its crankshaft turning in the same plane as the rear wheel to simplify the chain or belt final drive.

But therein also lies the genesis of America's unfailing tendency to associate vee-twin engines with Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Because if Harley's vee doesn't date from motorcycling's dawn, it's at least from pretty early in the morning. By the time Calvin Coolidge was letting the country run itself, vee-twin motorcycles were carrying thousands of American boys across the heartland; and that engine layout had already become the country's accepted standard for how a motorsickle engine ought to look.

Americans have never been able to shake the notion that H-Ds and twin vees are practically one and the same, not even in this day and age, in which almost every conceivable engine configuration is available to the public. So it was inevitable that Yamaha's Virago and Honda's Shadow would be considered little more than high-tech, oil-tight clones of a Harley-Davidson.

In truth, though, any real and meaningful similarities in these three engines are precious few and probably accidental. Take the spread of the cylinders, for instance. From the standpoint of engine smoothness, a 90-degree vee-twin is ideal, since the secondary imbalance of one cylinder cancels the primary imbalance of the other, and vice-versa. But a 90-degree engine is exceptionally long and difficult to wrap the bodywork around; and since style, not function, is the priority on bikes of this type, all three designs favor narrower angles. The Harley's time-honored 45-degree vee incorporates no vibration-canceling measures, so it shakes, rattles and rolls just like always with low-frequency, high-amplitude vibes.

Both the Japanese engines evidence a greater concern for smoothness. Yamaha's engineers decided that a 75-degree vee struck a nice, er, *balance* between acceptable vibration levels and the narrower angle preferred for "the look." The Virago has no counterbalancers, either, but its 75-degree spread renders it much smoother than the Harley. Honda, however, wanted that 45-degree Milwaukee look, so its engineers worked out an interesting solution. They discovered that staggering the crankpins in accordance with a simple formula (multiply the vee-spread by two and subtract the result from 180) would enable a vee-twin of *any* angle to have the same perfect primary balance as a 90-degree vee. And so the Shadow, with a 45-degree cylinder-spread, has its crankpins staggered 90 degrees.

But Honda's solution to that problem introduced another: a rocking couple, which is the tendency of the engine to rock from side to side in its mountings. See, staggered crankpins require the use of two individual crank journals separated by a central flywheel that serves as an anchor for the inside end of each crankpin. The cylinders, therefore, are laterally offset from one another a like amount; the end result of having the cylinders working simultaneously in parallel planes, but different directions, is the aforementioned rocking couple. And for all intents and purposes, that couple *feels* like vibration. The Yamaha also has its rod journals side-by-side, but on a common crankpin with no central flywheel; because that arrangement doesn't require as much cylinder offset, the Virago has less of a rocking couple.

Then there's the Harley, which for all its other assorted vibrations has no couple at

all, since it uses an idea as old as the vee-twin itself: fork-and-blade connecting rods on a single, narrow crankpin. The rod for the forward cylinder is the blade, while the rear rod is forked and has its bearing area split half on each side so it can wrap around the front rod. This doesn't offer ideal rod-bearing area for today's breed of high-performance engines, but it allows the cylinders to be on the same centerline and thus causes no rocking couple.

That Harley's interior contains still more from mechanical engineering's past. It all made sense back then, however, since the exigencies of the Harley's dry-sump oiling system and forked conrods dictated the use of roller bearings, one-piece rods and a five-piece, built-up crankshaft bolted together and indexed with keyways and taper fits. Current technology, with better bearing materials and superior metallurgy, could make for a more conventional arrangement, as witnessed by the one-piece forged crank, plain bearings, two-piece rods and wet-sump oiling of both the Shadow and Virago.

Up top you find still more significant differences. Both of the Japanese motors use overhead camshafts—one per bank—that operate the valves through rocker-type cam followers. The Yamaha uses conventional screw-type valve adjusters, but in the Honda, valve adjustment is automatic. The rockers pivot on eccentric shafts regulated by hydraulic lash adjusters that resemble automotive hydraulic lifters. Thus, it is never necessary to adjust the valves on the Shadow.

The Harley's overhead valves also use screw-type adjusters but are operated by lengthy pushrods, each housed in its own external pushrod tube and actuated by its own individual camshaft down in the massive timing case on the engine's right side. Each of the four, single-lobe cams is driven by its own gear, and all the lifters have roller followers (another concept, incidentally, rendered largely unnecessary by advances in metallurgy and lubrication) for reduced friction.

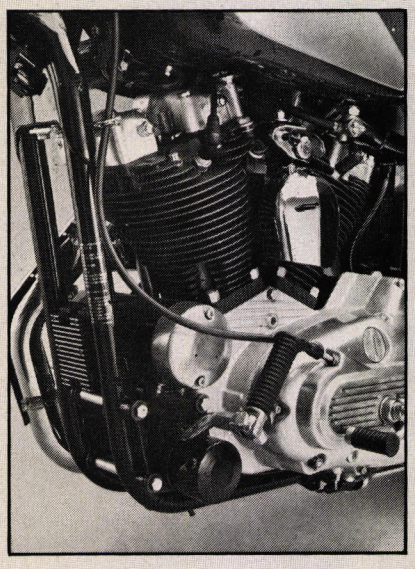
In the cylinder heads themselves, the Japanese engines, not surprisingly, reflect more modern technology than does the Harley. The Virago, with each cylinder's two valves set at a fairly narrow included angle above a flat-topped piston, is highly conventional. The Shadow's combustion chamber, however, is state-of-the-art: three valves—two intake and one exhaust—at a very narrow 37-degree included angle, all residing in a heart-shaped chamber with the mixture fired by two plugs per cylinder. And if all of that seems like techno-overkill in a motorcycle whose targeted buyers value high-style more than high-performance, consider this: Honda insists that its motives were to put the Shadow at the very head of its class both in fuel efficiency and overall performance, all while easily meeting current emissions requirements. Liquid-cooling, too, was chosen for logical, if not readily apparent, reasons, the most important of which was to preclude the possibility of rear-cylinder overheating—always a concern in the mind of a tandem-vee engine designer.

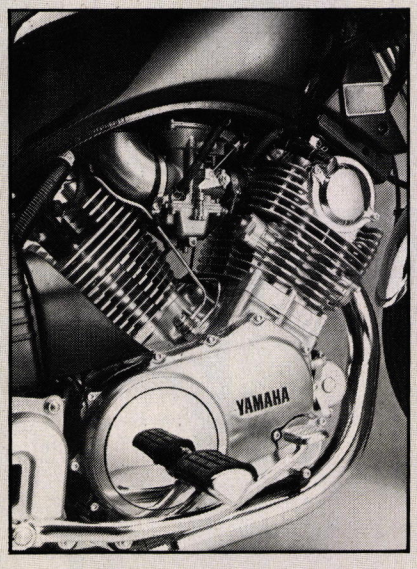
Once again, though, the Harley stays with tradition in its head design: a big, deep hemispherical combustion chamber with a 90-degree included valve angle, a large dome on the piston to bring the compression ratio into line, and a single spark-plug off to the side. Not the optimum, certainly, for the most complete and efficient combustion; but it, like most aspects of the H-D engine, reflects thinking that was developed through the Thirties and had just about run out of gas by the Fifties.

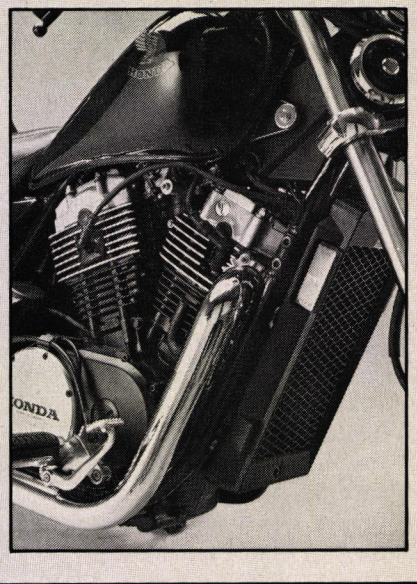
You won't find much new in the H-D's gearbox, either, for the four-speed unit on the XLS is essentially the same as on the very first Sportster back in 1957. But, when you've got a long-stroke, high-torque, low-rpm engine in a non-performance motorcycle, who needs more gears? Well, for one, Honda thinks the shorter-stroke, higher-revving Shadow does, claiming that its six-speed gearbox will work dollar-saving wonders for the fuel mileage. But Yamaha, just as it has in almost every other area of the Virago's engine, took the conventional route and equipped the XV920 with the number of gears considered standard these days: five.

Actually, the word "conventional" is stretched to its limits on all of these machines, including the middle-of-the-road Yamaha, for they're as much unlike the other motorcycles on the market as they are one another. You can see for yourself just how different each one looks; and you've just read about how their vee-twin engines—their so-called common denominator, the one element alleged to make them three of a kind—have practically no similarities whatsoever. They are, naturally, three distinctly different variations on the same basic theme. But the notion that having a vee-twin engine qualifies any motorcycle as a Harley-Davidson replica is, if you'll pardon the pun, pure hawg-wash.

—Don Fuller







Despite similarities in general appearance, all three engines show markedly different approaches to the building of a vee-twin

But all roads still lead to the boulevard.

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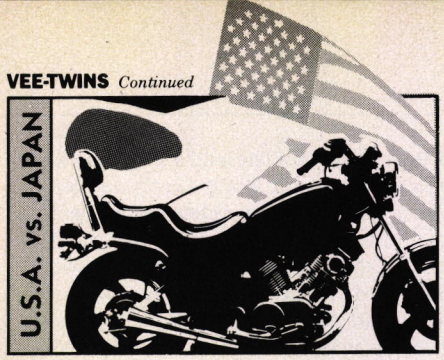


toting up vee-twin virtues, don't neglect the single most noticeable benefit to the rider: torque. Double handsful of torque that produce an easy, loping canter at speed and a supremely flexible powerband that makes downshifting almost an option.

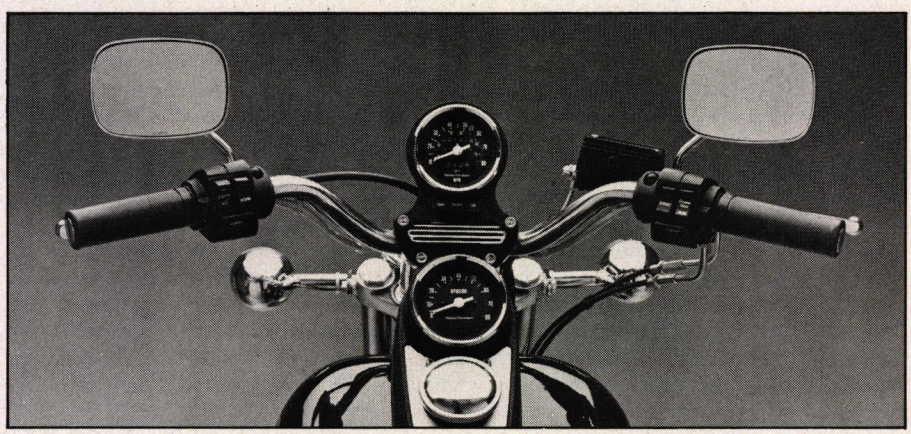
Each of the three vees has it—in spades. This is no comparison of limp-wristed clutch-slippers. And it's no weak-sister shootout in a stoplight drama, either. The XLS is the most, er, dramatic of the three, with the deepest, richest exhaust note. The Shadow manages a basso that, if not precisely profundo, is still a satisfyingly healthy rumble. Only the Yamaha seems a bit strangled in exhaust drone.

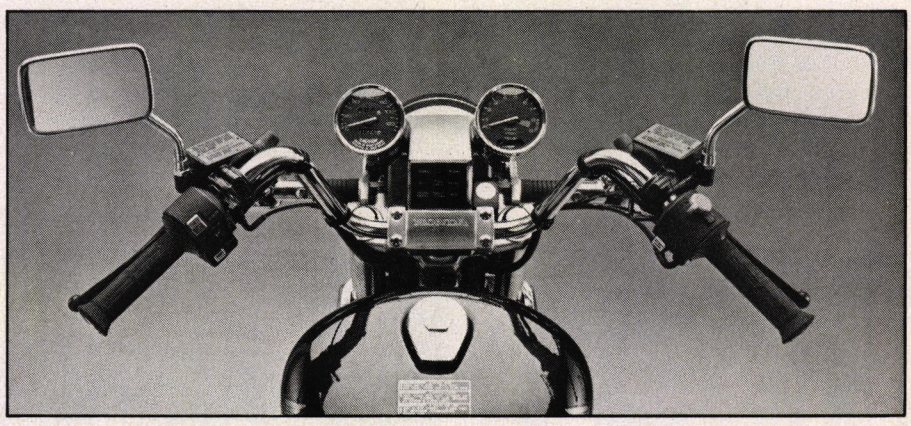
Act two of the drama continues with vibration levels. At all engine speeds the Roadster, 45 degrees, non-counterbalanced and proud of it, does a shake and rattle through all rider contact points that just manages to come off as mechanical rather than maniacal. By comparison, the Virago seems far more sophisticated, with only enough vibration—in the lower rev range, anyway—to remind you that you're aboard a vee, by God, and not some lesser vehicle. And the Shadow, with the mathematical perfection of its staggered crankpins, still does vibrate, through the handlebar and footpegs, to a greater or lesser extent at all engine speeds. Unless your sense-receptors are honed to a finer edge than ours, Honda's contention that what you feel is a rocking couple instead of some other vibration will be a fine point, indeed. Whatever it is, it still *feels* like vibration.

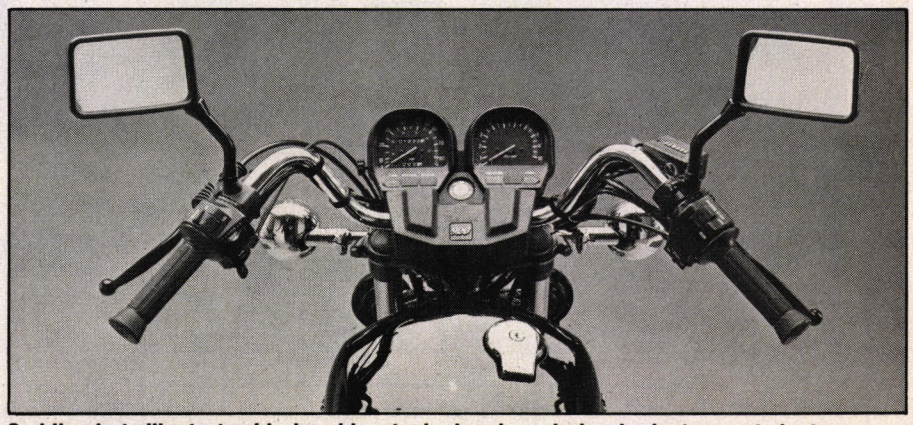
Which is not to say that the Honda is all show and no go. Far from it. The Shadow, with the smallest engine of the three, had the best roll-on. In top-gear acceleration from 60 mph with the Honda in fifth or sixth gear, it pulled resolutely away from the Virago, and neatly outdistanced the Harley. The same held true for top-speed runs, with the Shadow willingly pulling to its 8000-rpm redline in fifth and to 7400 rpm—for an indicated top speed of 127 mph—in sixth. That puts it some distance from the Virago, which barely pulled redline in fifth, for a ground speed just shy of 108. The Harley seemed to stop making power at higher rpm and would only pull to about 5600 rpm, 400 below redline, for an observed top speed of 106.

Charting The Changes

Brakes: Single-disc front brake replaces '82 model's double-disc setup. Rear drum brake unchanged.
Suspension: Four-position fork-damping adjustment deleted.
Instrumentation: CYCOM (contraction of CYcle COMputer) and CMS (Computer Monitor System)—which used LCD (liquid crystal display) readouts to indicate oil, brake fluid, fuel and battery electrolyte levels, sidestand position and headlight and taillight operation—dropped in favor of more conventional, non-LCD instrumentation.
Details: Seat now has more exaggerated step. Passenger grabrail extends into padded backrest. Front fender shortened for appearance. Round, 7-inch headlamp replaces '82 model's rectangular headlamp. Conventional handlebar, identical to 750 Virago's, replaces splined, six-way-adjustable compound handlebars. Straight-cut mufflers replace '82 Virago's baloney-slice exhausts. Taillight moved from grabrail to rear fender. Turnsignals repositioned up and back, onto grabrail.







Saddle-shots illustrate side-by-side, stacked and semi-circular instrument clusters

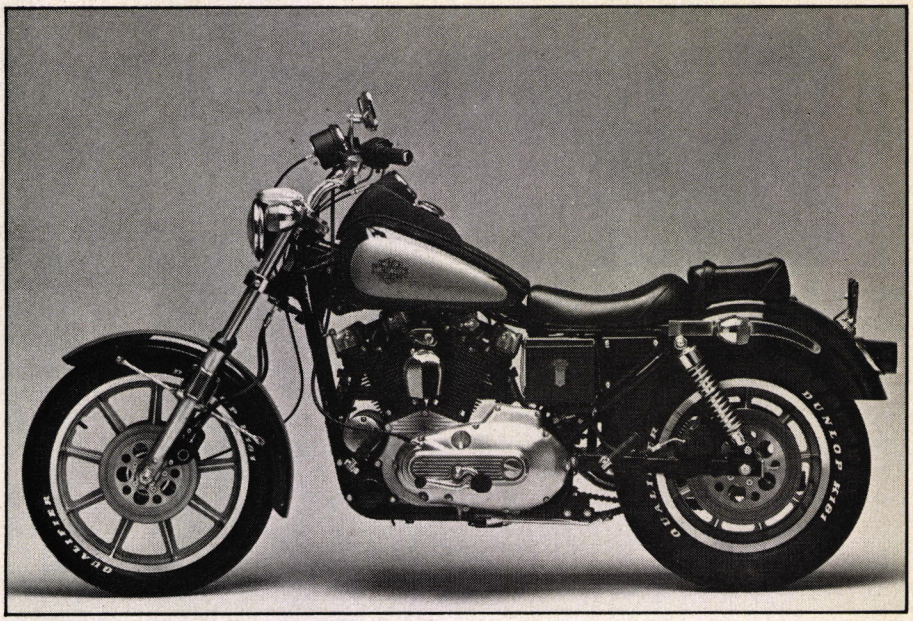
And everything from quasi-apehangers to low-rise handlebars.

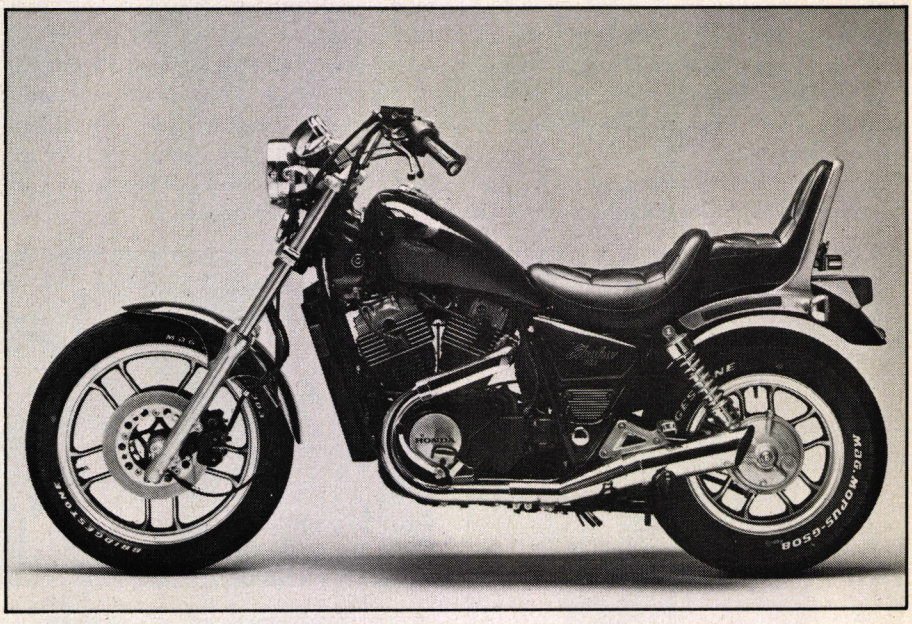
That's valuable consumer information, certainly, but absolute performance figures on vee-twin boulevard bikes are almost out of context. Far more important with these bikes is each one's riding attitude at speeds where the tach needle isn't dancing crazily at redline. Since most of the riders of any of these three vees will never push them—or keep them—at their limits on a regular basis, lower-speed considerations of comfort, ergonomic layout and suspension action play a bigger role than racetrack statistics in determining how each bike fills the cruiser niche.

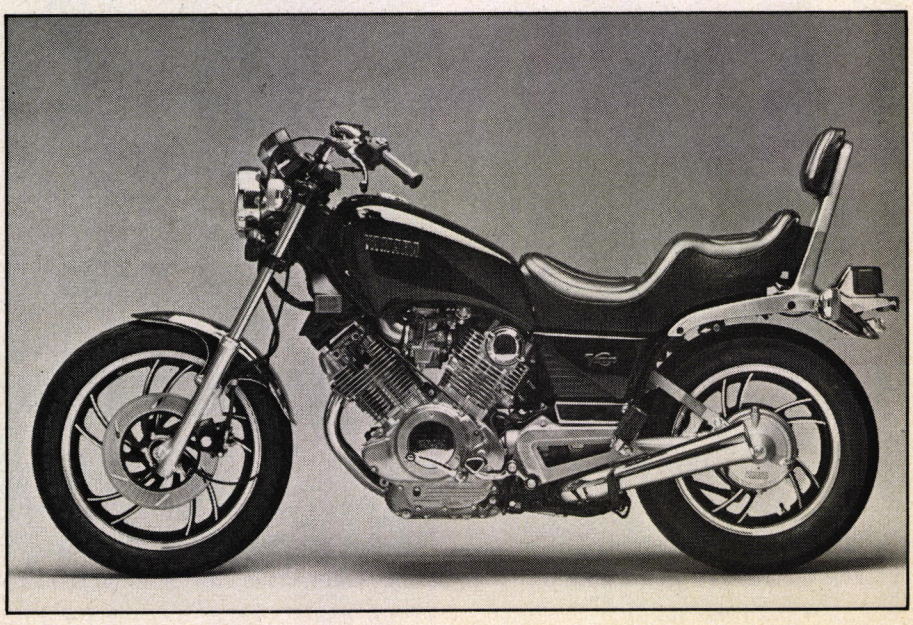
There, the Shadow finds its greatest liability. The exaggerated cruiser riding position formed by the extremely forward-mounted pegs and high, wide handlebar forces the rider against the rear lip of the front section of the saddle, and offers little or no room for movement. Road-jolts, too, seem magnified by the cramped, straight-up posture the Shadow demands. Further complicating the situation are passenger pegs that can't really be used for variation from the one-place riding position, since not only are they high and far back (yielding an uncomfortable knee-bend), but the distance between passenger pegs and rider pegs would significantly delay use of the foot controls. Compounding that delay, for the shifter at least, is that upshifting is already a sluggish process. The shifter throw is relatively long, and the gearshift lever is short, making it somewhat of an effort just to get a boot under the shifter; after a while we found it easier and quicker to upshift by dragging a bootheel back across the top of the shifter.

The Honda's rider envelope is its most limiting factor, but it isn't the only one. While the brakes work well (offering the best stopping in the test) and low- and high-speed steering is light, the fork is underdamped. That fact shows up in even moderately fast cornering—or anytime the powerful front brakes are applied. And as the Shadow's rear end jacks up and down with shaft-drive torque reaction, the limp fork can turn the motion into full-bike hobbyhorsing.

Yamaha scores better on the street, primarily because the Virago's ergonomics aren't nearly so extreme. The handlebar bend, still appropriately buckhornish, is less radical than the Honda's, and the footpeg location, still very much in the custom vein, allows for longer unpained time in the saddle. With the fork air-pressure and Monoshock air and damping set appropriately (we preferred 9 psi in the fork, 20 psi in the shock and damping set on the fourth-hardest of six settings), the Virago will show the faster Shadow the quick







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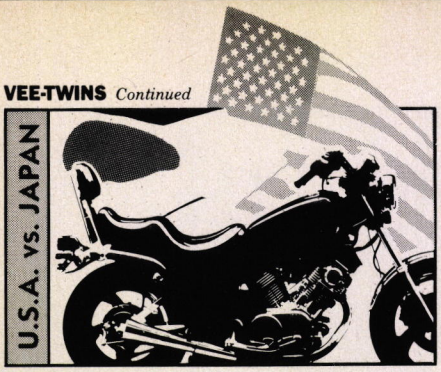


way through the turns. And, more to the point, the Virago's in-town ride is better as well—with one caveat: The Virago is by far the most sensitive of the three to the need to match road speed and engine speed when downshifting. Minus the one-way clutch of the Shadow, the Virago will chirp tires and stand the bike up in a corner if you down-shift without attending to the tachometer.

Which leaves the Harley, long the butt of jibes about how it doesn't stack-up against Japanese hardware. But out on urban streets, the home of the vee-twin cruiser, it just isn't so. Steering effort is light and responsive, and the suspension, though stiff in the rear (we kept our XLS on the lightest preload setting throughout the test), handles potholes to paving strips without pummeling the rider. Further saving the rider from feeling like he's just been worked over by a street gang is the best riding position of the three vees; not only are all *three* sets of pegs useful to the rider, offering the best opportunity to stretch and relax without leaving the saddle, but the moderate handlebar bend manages to look fully the part of the custom without forcing any uncomfortable wrist angles.

That's not to say that the XLS is devoid of its own quirks, because it isn't. The seat, while well-positioned, is thinly padded. And all the controls, from clutch and shifter to brakes, require larger, more pronounced inputs than those on either the Shadow or the Virago. That doesn't mean you've got to, say, apply a two-handed death-grip on the front brake lever before

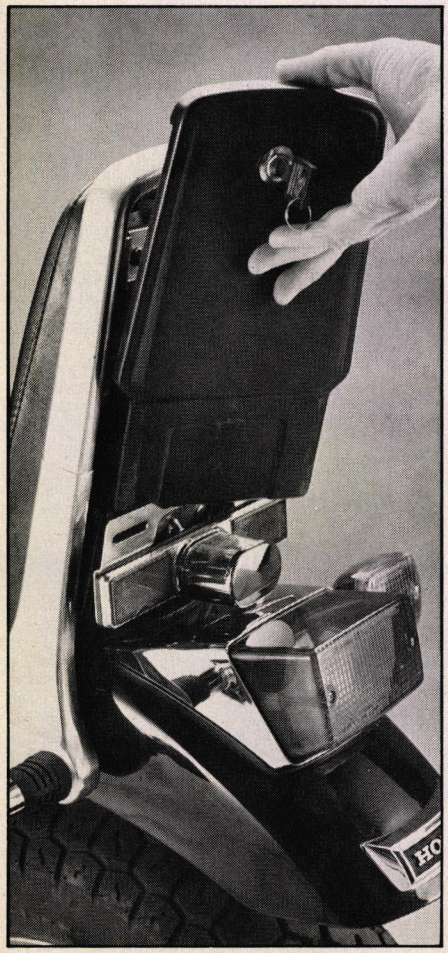
Charting The Changes

Engine: The XLS, like all 1983 Sportsters, uses a vacuum-controlled, two-stage ignition advance. Compression ratio increased from 8.1:1 to 8.8:1. Ring design changed for better sealing and longer life. Exhaust pipes are shorter and less restrictive; balance-pipe diameter increased. Oval air-cleaner replaces larger unit on '82 model.

Suspension: Triple clamps unchanged, but fork tube length reduced 2.0 inches, resulting in a steeper steering-head angle of 29.7 degrees, with 4.5 inches of trail.

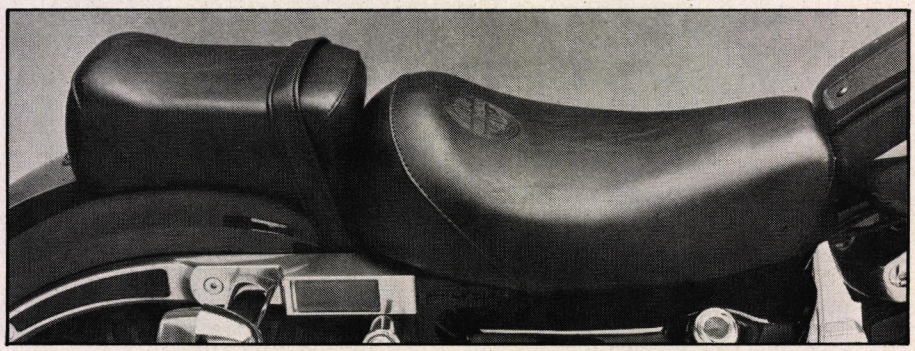
Wheels: Cast aluminum wheels replace wire-spoke wheels found on '82 XLS. Rim diameters unchanged.

Details: New, lower handlebar with curved, 3-inch risers replaces '82 model's buckhorn handlebar. Larger, "Fat-Bob" fuel tank replaces 3.3-gallon FXE-style tank. Chainguard redesigned for appearance and lighter weight. Seat is smaller, and lacks '82 model's padded backrest. Engine cases now polished; cases on '82 XLS were black. Tachometer moved to fuel tank console; speedometer now bolted to handlebar mounting brackets. Front turnsignals repositioned from handlebar to upper triple clamp. Ratcheting-type, spin-on-type gas cap now standard.



Locking toolkit in Shadow's backrest

For tools you can lean on.



Harley and Yamaha offer differing philosophies in two-upmanship

"I ride alone" versus "Let's go for a ride."

the XLS begins to slow, but it's true that off-the-cuff, two-finger braking is not a part of the Harley's road repertoire—at least not unless you've got fingers the size of a roll of quarters. Still, it's a cooperative venture from the saddle of the XLS: You do your part and the bike will do likewise.

That cooperation extends beyond city limits, as well. High-speed steering on the XLS is as stable as the Virago's, which makes it steadier at speed than the nervous-feeling Honda. And in seven- to eight-tenths cornering, the XLS allows a smooth, precise line. Corner-charging at that speed is best accomplished with a set-it-and-forget-it attitude that relies on engine-braking, since the transmission responds to slower, more-deliberate shifting, and the brakes, as mentioned, require some extra effort in use. Still, while the XLS is guaranteed not to dust-off any serious apex- clipper, neither does it fall to its knees at the edge of town.

All of which leads to a conclusion, an answer to the question posed above: Which one is the best for urban trolling—and why? As we see it, the 750 Shadow is almost a motorcycle built as an excuse to manufacture an engine. If the Shadow's rider

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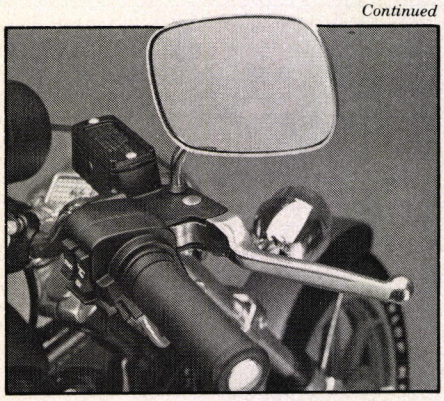


Dogleg levers ease XLS control effort

Serious squeeze play is still required.

Control placement slows Shadow's shifting

A case where heel-dragging helps.

VIEWPOINT:

A Gathering of Cruisers

Drawing battle lines at boulevard level.

• If you still need proof that you can't have it all, you don't have to look any further than these three motorcycles. Your money will buy either appearance or function, but getting both is a little tricky. The Yamaha holds up the function end, and does it quite well. It has the smooth power and comfort to win on the balance sheets of the most pragmatic riders. But there's a hitch—the Virago is almost invisible. Its styling is so ordinary—even *boring*—that you wouldn't notice the bike even if you tripped over it in your living room.

Then there's the Harley, which is a beautiful piece of sculpture, but about as practical as a sunroof in a subway car. The XLS shakes, the seat is a good argument for standing up, and the motorcycle accelerates like a rowboat going upstream.

That leaves the Honda, a bike that isn't as pleasing to the eye as the Harley, and isn't as fun to ride as the Yamaha. But for me it's a better motorcycle. On the road, it runs well enough to make *me* happy, and in the garage, its appearance can inspire more than a fair amount of pride. If that sounds like a compromise, fine. Some of the parts might not be perfect, but at least they're all there. *—Ron Lawson*

• In theory, these two Japanese vees seem to offer the best of both worlds, perfectly blending the look and feel that made Milwaukee famous with the technology and performance that made Japan Number One in the industry. But as any chemistry student can attest, combining two known elements usually yields a third, entirely different substance. Which is exactly what happened here. And the resultant motorcycles fall short of their promise in one way or another. The Shadow certainly looks more like a Harley than anything ever built in the Far East, but functionally it's from the planet Strange. And while the Virago is a quietly competent performer in its own way, its appearance is anything but vintage Hawg.

That's why the Roadster gets my vote as the consummate cruiservee. Because if I have to surrender downright function just to have outright style, it's going to be on The Real Thing, not a genuine imitation. Anyway, since the extremely loyal H-D rank-and-file hasn't been asking for a better Harley, why should anyone try to build one? That's best left to the people in Milwaukee. And I'm not talking about the ones who brew beer. *—Paul Dean*

• You'd think it would be simple. Once they put their minds to it, it seems, Oriental engineers can build anything they want to. So why the problem with vee-twin cruisers?

Their mistake, as I see it, was to think only of the engine; they had to re-invent the vee, first. Fine, but that's as far as it went. The rest of these bikes—the parts you sit on and ride—are no more than collections of Japanese cliches for what American boulevard bikes should be.

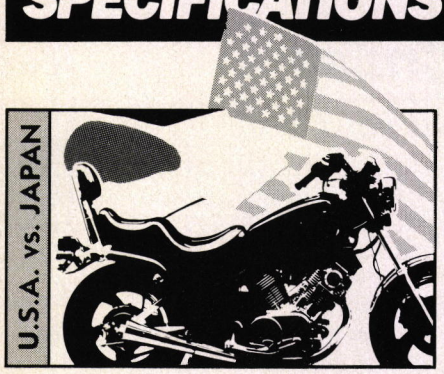
Handlebars? We're supposed to like high, pull-back ones; what we get is only slightly less ridiculous than Fonzie's ape-hanger. Same for the seats; each of these Japanese cruisers has a locks-you-in-one-position, high-stepped model. And the list goes on, each point building the argument that appearance was the only concern.

But you'll notice the Harley has none of that pull-back, stepped-up, doesn't-fit-right exaggeration. Right now, the Shadow and Virago are like two four-year-olds playing dress-up, with the lipstick smeared all over their cheeks. But maybe when they grow up a little—like the 26-year-old Harley—they'll know how to dress right, too. *—Joe Kress*

• I don't agree; to me, the Yamaha 920 Virago wins this shootout, no question about it. Sure, the Harley-Davidson XLS has more bad-dude, I-can-whup-any-man-in-the-joint image in one of its control levers than a whole fleet of Viragos. And, yes, the Shadow—with its flexible engine that makes power from idle, yet revs, too—can absolutely kill the Virago in a roll-on contest.

But while the XLS's image might be unassailable, image puts no extra padding in the thin saddle, damps no vibration and smooths no bumpy roads. And the Honda's motor is overshadowed by an exaggerated riding position, flaccid suspension and shaft-drive torque reaction that conspire to make the VT750C about as accommodating as a thumb in the eye.

So there's the answer. The 920 Virago—a blood bro of the 750 Virago—has a broader appeal for me than the Shadow or the XLS. It's fit for duty above and beyond the call of the boulevard, going about its tasks without abusing the rider and without forcing him to compensate for any additional quirks. And that counts for more than any amount of image or speed. *—Charles Everitt*



considerations—ergonomics, comfort and suspension—matched the sophistication built into its engine, the Honda would be a great motorcycle. But they don't. And they don't to the extent that they knock the Shadow out of contention as the best of the vees.

Somewhat harder to position is the Virago, because by a lot of standards, it's the best of the three. The 920 vibrates the least objectionably, handles well and, outside of a slight choppiness at the rear, delivers a comfortable ride. If you were shopping for a wide-band cruiser on a pure-function basis, you'd be hard-pressed not to call the Virago the winner. But as an emotion-generator, undeniably a factor in cruiservees, it lacks *something*. Some element, perhaps in its more-subdued styling or softer exhaust note, hampers the 920's ability to instantly arouse as much unbridled sentiment as either the XLS or the Shadow. On strictly emotional terms, the Virago seems somehow drab. Pleasant, efficient, but plain.

So we're going out on a limb. We're calling the Roadster the winner, the best of the cruiservees. It's a decision admittedly tipped by subjectivity, but not completely so. The Roadster is, contrary to the protestations of its detractors, a competent motorcycle that neither hammers its rider into submission nor plagues him with bizarre traits. Rather, it serves up a satisfying blend of performance *and* personality. And while the XLS isn't the fastest or the quickest motorcycle in this shootout, so what? Those factors aren't the only meaningful measures of an emotional custom. And as an emotional device, the Harley stands as much-copied but as yet unequalled.

But, since some of the factors that went into our decision can't be weighed, paced-off or proven categorically, our choice might very well not be *your* choice. That's as it should be. For in a comparison of vee-twin cruisers, a bike's value is not just in how it transports its rider; it's in how the machine *moves* him, as well. ●

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Harley-Davidson XLS Roadster

MANUFACTURER: Harley-Davidson Motor Company Inc., 3700 West Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

RETAIL PRICE: $5160 for Indigo Blue; $5130 for Black

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	81.0mm x 96.8mm
Displacement	997.6cc
Compression ratio	8.8:1
Engine redline	6000 rpm
Carburetion	one 34mm Keihin butterfly-type with accelerator pump
Air filter	washable oiled foam element
Lubrication	dry sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	transistorized breakerless
Charging system	12-volt; 156-watt generator, voltage regulator, 19-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive ..... triple-row chain; 1.735:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #530 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 3/8-in. width); 2.286:1 (48/21) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.526	10.019	7.47
II	1.828	7.251	10.32
III	1.384	5.489	13.63
IV	1.000	3.966	18.87

SUSPENSION/ WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... Showa, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/ 6.1 in. (155mm)
Rear ..... dual Showa shocks, 3-position adjustable spring preload/3.4 in. (86mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.0-in. (255mm) discs
Rear ..... single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.6-in. (295mm) disc

TIRES

Front ..... MJ90-19 Dunlop K181 Qualifier
Rear ..... MT90-16 Dunlop K181 Qualifier

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	515 lbs. (233.6kg)
Weight distribution	46.6% front, 53.4% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	900 lbs. (408kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank)	359 lbs. (163kg)
Wheelbase	58.5 to 59.8 in. (1487 to 1519mm)
Seat height	29.5 in. (750mm)
Handlebar width	27.6 in. (700mm)
Footpeg height	12.6 in. (320mm)
Ground clearance	6.9 in. (176mm), at sidestand mount
Steering head angle	29.7 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.50 in. (114mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	3.0 qt. (2.8*l*)
Fuel tank	steel, 4.2 gal. (16.0*l*), including 0.5 gal. (2.0*l*) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range	43 to 55 mpg (18 to 23 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption	48 mpg (20 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum	181 to 231 miles (291 to 372km)
Cruising range, reserve only	22 to 28 miles (35 to 45km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated	52 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration	13.842 sec., 93.94 mph (151 km/h)
Top speed (observed)	106 mph (171 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	31 ft. (9.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	138 ft. (42.1m)

WARRANTY: 6 months, 6000 miles

AVAILABLE COLORS: Indigo Blue and Pewter, or Black

Honda VT750C Shadow

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company Inc., 100 West Alondra Boulevard, Gardena, California 90247

$2998

Type ..... liquid-cooled four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement ..... single overhead camshafts, three valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke ..... 79.5mm x 75.5mm
Displacement 749.6cc
Compression ratio 9.8:1
Engine redline ..... 8000 rpm
Carburetion ..... two 34mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter ..... washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... wet sump
Starting system ..... electric only
Ignition ..... transistorized breakerless, two plugs per cylinder
Charging system ..... 12-volt; 340-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 16-ampere-hour battery

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 1.737:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate, with one-way overrun clutch
Transmission-to-jackshaft drive ... straight-cut gears; 0.806:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-driveshaft drive .... spiral-bevel gears; 1.188:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive .... spiral-bevel gears; 3.400:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.294	12.959	5.61
II	1.619	9.146	7.95
III	1.292	7.297	9.97
IV	1.074	6.067	11.99
V	0.897	5.065	14.36
VI	0.750	4.237	17.17

Front ..... Showa air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter/5.3 in. (135mm)
Rear ..... dual Showa shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/3.7 in. (95mm)

Front ..... dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.9-in. (276mm) discs
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, cable-operated

Front .... 110/90-19 62H Bridgestone Mag Mopus L303 tubeless
Rear .... 140/90-15 70H Bridgestone Mag Mopus G508 tubeless

Weight ..... 484 lbs. (219.5kg)
Weight distribution ..... 45.8% front, 54.2% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) ..... 870 lbs. (395kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) ..... 366 lbs. (166kg)
Wheelbase ..... 60.0 in. (1523mm)
Seat height ..... 29.8 in. (757mm)
Handlebar width ..... 29.9 in. (760mm)
Footpeg height ..... 13.6 in. (345mm)
Ground clearance ..... 6.6 in. (168mm), at sidestand mount
Steering head angle ..... 32.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 5.47 in. (139mm)
Frame ..... tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity ..... 3.7 qt. (3.5*l*)
Fuel tank ..... steel, 3.3 gal. (12.5*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation ... speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, engine temperature gauge, low-fuel warning light

Fuel consumption range ..... 48 to 55 mpg (20 to 23 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption ..... 52 mpg (22 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum ..... 158 to 182 miles (254 to 293km)
Cruising range, reserve only ..... no reserve capacity
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated ..... 27 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated ..... 51 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration ... 12.906 sec.,100.78 mph (162 km/h)
Top speed (observed) ..... 127 mph (204 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph ..... 29 ft. (8.8m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph ..... 132 ft. (40.2m)

12 months unlimited mileage

Candy Wineberry Red or Candy Black

Yamaha XV920 Virago

IMPORTER: Yamaha Motor Corporation USA, 6555 Katella Avenue, Cypress, California 90630

$3399

Type ..... four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement ..... single overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke ..... 92.0mm x 69.2mm
Displacement 920.0cc
Compression ratio 8.3:1
Engine redline ..... 7000 rpm
Carburetion ..... two 40mm Hitachi constant-vacuum
Air filter ..... disposable paper element
Lubrication ..... wet sump
Starting system ..... electric only
Ignition ..... transistorized breakerless
Charging system ..... 12-volt; 225-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 1.660:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-jackshaft drive .... straight-cut gears; 1.022:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-driveshaft drive ..... spiral-bevel gears; 1.056:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive ..... spiral-bevel gears; 2.909:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.353	12.251	6.10
II	1.667	8.678	8.61
III	1.286	6.695	11.16
IV	1.033	5.375	13.90
V	0.909	4.734	15.78

Front ..... Kayaba air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/5.8 in. (147mm)
Rear ..... single Yamaha air-spring shock, 6-position adjustable rebound damping/4.1 in. (106mm)

Front ..... single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.8-in. (300mm) disc
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

Front ..... 3.50H19 Dunlop Gold Seal F-11 tubeless
Rear ..... 130/90-16 67H Dunlop K327M tubeless

Weight ..... 503 lbs. (228.1kg)
Weight distribution ..... 44.9% front, 55.1% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) ..... 1060 lbs. (481kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) ..... 534 lbs. (242kg)
Wheelbase ..... 59.8 in. (1520mm)
Seat height ..... 29.5 in. (750mm)
Handlebar width ..... 28.3 in. (720mm)
Footpeg height ..... 12.0 in. (305mm)
Ground clearance ..... 5.5 in. (139mm), at crankcase sump
Steering head angle ..... 29.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 5.24 in. (133mm)
Frame ..... pressed steel backbone
Oil capacity ..... 3.8 qt. (3.6*l*)
Fuel tank .... steel, 3.7 gal. (14.0*l*), including 0.5 gal. (2.0*l*) reserve
Instrumentation ..... speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer

Fuel consumption range ..... 38 to 45 mpg (16 to 19 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption ..... 41 mpg (17 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum ..... 144 to 171 miles (232 to 275km)
Cruising range, reserve only ..... 19 to 23 miles (31 to 37km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated ..... 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated ..... 54 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration ... 12.835 sec.,101.46 mph (163 km/h)
Top speed (observed) ..... 108 mph (174 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph ..... 33 ft. (10.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph ..... 138 ft. (42.1m)

12 months unlimited mileage

New Yamaha Black or Romanesque Crimson

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Tour Rider Cold Weather Riding Suit

Beating the weatherman at his own game.

• *You* might like to ride when the weather turns cold, damp and miserable. I don't; at least, not when *I* turn as cold and wet as the weather. That hasn't been much of a problem lately, though not because the weather suddenly has turned benign. It's just that I wintered this year in a Tour Rider two-piece riding suit.

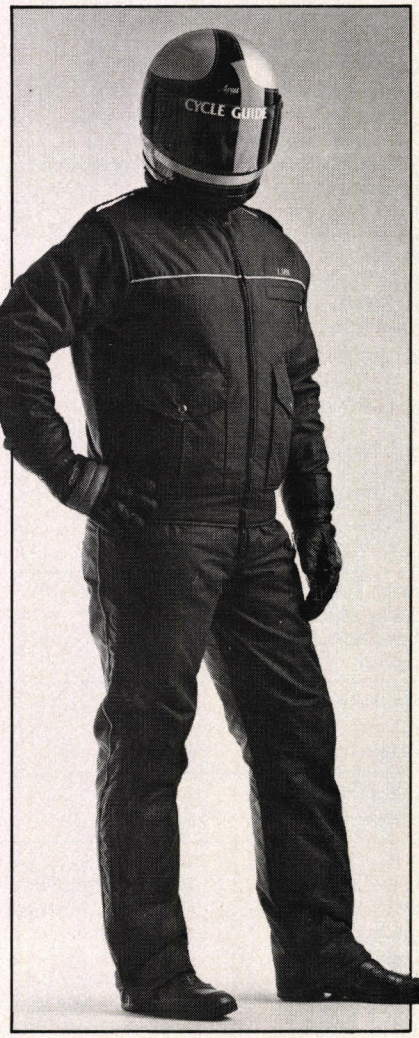
In appearance, the Tour Rider Sport Jacket and Bib Pants I've been wearing might not seem too far removed from the outerwear available from any number of aftermarket suppliers, but it is. Useful details and excellent workmanship make this suit among the very best.

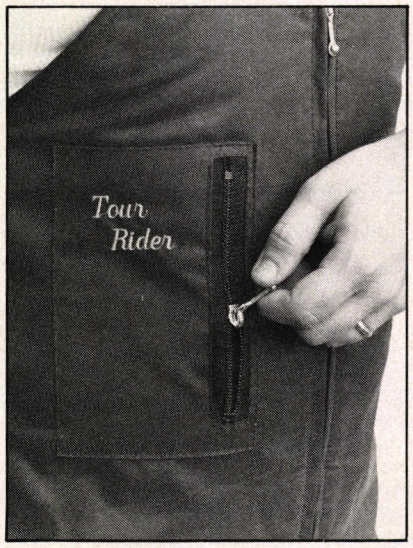
The outer shell of both jacket and pants is a urethane-coated, close-weave nylon. The lining is a Poly Slim polyester, which, unlike some other materials used as insulation in riding suits, doesn't make you look like the Michelin Man when you suit up for a ride—at least, not unless you resembled him *before* you got dressed.

A double layer of insulation from the knee down to boot-top level and a double layer of nylon in the seat add to riding comfort, and the overalls' elasticized suspenders, stirrups and a back panel keep them snug without binding. Velcro straps at the ankles stop windblasts up the legs, which have two-way, full-length zippers with storm flaps. The men's overalls has a two-way fly front zipper, while the women's version features a zippered drop-seat. In either case, getting into or out of the overalls is a matter of seconds.

Similar useful considerations went into the jacket (either the Sport Jacket shown, or a hip-length Tour Jacket with a two-way front zipper). The collar can be worn open, rolled up into a turtleneck position or zipped up all the way, where it will tuck up inside a helmet for complete coverage of your neck and throat. Velcro closures seal off the wrist openings, and unlike those on some suits that use knit cuffs or bulkier insulation, pose no problems with cold-weather gloves' gauntlets.

An eye toward function is also apparent in the placement of the Tour Rider suit's nine pockets. The jacket itself has seven: an inside breast pocket, two outside zippered pockets (left sleeve and breast), two slash-style handwarmer pockets and a pair of velcro-sealed cargo pockets. As you'd expect, they offer considerable carrying capacity, but manage the feat without adding unnecessary bulk. And the overalls have two pockets of their own—one in front, one in back—which are especially handy if you're using the pants to supplement the cold-weather capabilities of a leather jacket.





PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 VIC HUBER

Useful details, from well-placed pockets to handy zipper-pulls make the point clear

Tour Rider's suit is built to work, not just to look the part.

As useful as all those pockets are, though, they're nowhere near as much so as the suit's range of comfort. I've worn it in temperatures as low as 25 degrees F. and, with no other concessions to the cold save a heavy shirt, been perfectly toasty. Contrarily, the suit has seen use in temperatures as high as 85 degrees and, with the jacket's collar turned down and a T-shirt underneath, I didn't feel overbundled. Even wet weather wasn't much of a problem, though the Tour Rider suit isn't designed as—nor advertised as—a rainsuit. Flat-out gulleywashers had the suit leaking through its seams after about 30 minutes or so, but more moderate drizzles never showed up as wet spots inside.

And, if you're as hooked on riding comfort as I am, you can grab a share for yourself through most motorcycle dealers, or through Tour Rider, Dept. CG, 690 Northgate Mile, Idaho Falls, Idaho. The Sport Jacket in black or silver retails for $99.95 ($115.95 in Early Warning finish); overalls $97.50 ($115.95 Early Warning); or the Tour Coat $115.95 ($129.95 Early Warning).

—Larry Works

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU START WITH A MAXIM AND A VIRAGO AND DON'T STOP UNTIL MIDNIGHT?

INTRODUCING THE MIDNIGHT MAXIM 750.

It's a motorcycle as fast as it is black.

As black as it is fast.

And while this photograph hardly does justice to the Midnight Maxim's ability to shorten a city block, it does afford you a lingering look at midnight, as defined by Yamaha.

The glossy blackness of the sleek teardrop tank. The subtle texture of the engine's black Krinkle finish. The oil-polished sheen of those black chrome tailpipes. And countless other traces of the tender loving fit and finish you may find hard to appreciate once the throttle's in your hand. And your heart's in your mouth.

Because as this Maxim will quickly make abundantly clear, its ultra-narrow, 4-cylinder, DOHC powerplant with our patented Yamaha Induction Control System (YICS) and highly efficient shaft-drive produce a precision acceleration few 750's can measure up to.

Then there's what can't be measured in miles per hour.

Handling. The steady throatiness of the pipes. The sheer elegance and arrogance of all that black and gold.

The new Midnight Maxim 750, from Yamaha.

Seen here as it will rarely be seen anywhere else:

Standing still.

A
ONE
BRID
M2G.MOPUS-L303

INTRODUCING THE MIDNIGHT VIRAGO.

Some people said it was impossible to improve the Virago.

Impossible? No. Difficult? Definitely. Even for Yamaha.

After all, how do you improve a motorcycle that went from zero to classic in one year? A motorcycle whose intimidating appearance and ominous rumble were responsible for the first recorded cases of pedestrian whiplash?

You start by keeping the rumble.

And you concentrate on the intimidating.

The result is the motorcycle you see here. The new Midnight Virago 750. And, the motorcycle you don't see here, the new Midnight Virago 920.

These limited-edition models of our 1983 Virago 750 and 920 were created, with malice aforethought, to make anything the competition dreams up look pale by comparison.

And what could begin to compare with Yamaha's brand of black magic? The exclusive black Krinkle finish on the engine. The bottomless black gloss on every other painted

surface. The shimmering, oil-polished black chrome of the megaphone exhaust pipes. Accented from headlight to grab-rail with subtle touches of gold.

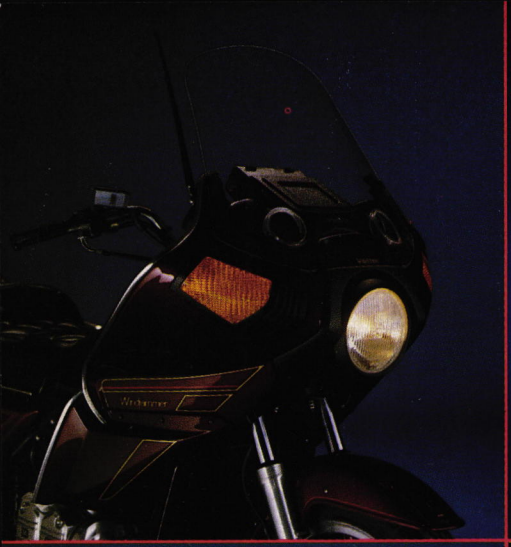
Of course, beneath that intimidating new exterior there lurks the technological innovation that makes any Virago a Virago: that still-unique combination of locomotive V-twin power and torque, shaft drive smoothness and civility, and Monoshock comfort.

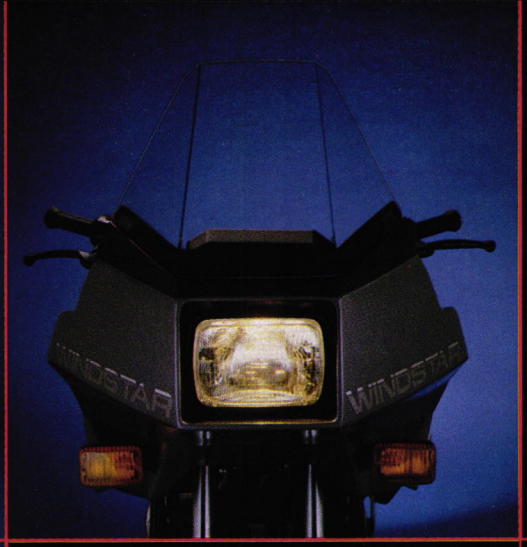
Everyone who's seen the new Midnight Viragos has been, at the very least, awestruck. In fact, they don't think we could possibly improve them.

And, this time, they could be right.

YAMAHA
THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

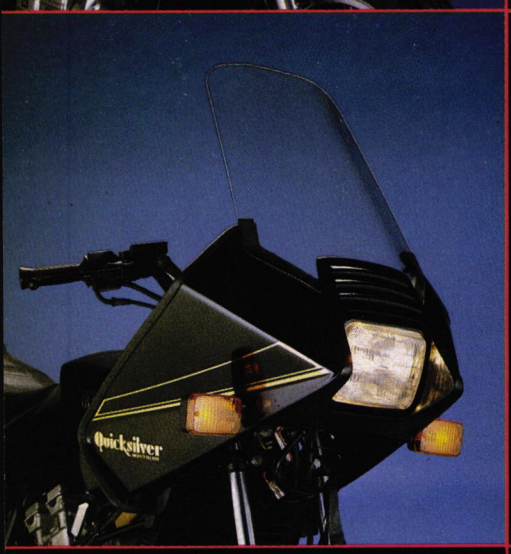
ONE YEAR UNLIMITED MILEAGE WARRANTY. *Warranty terms are limited. See your Yamaha dealer for complete details.*





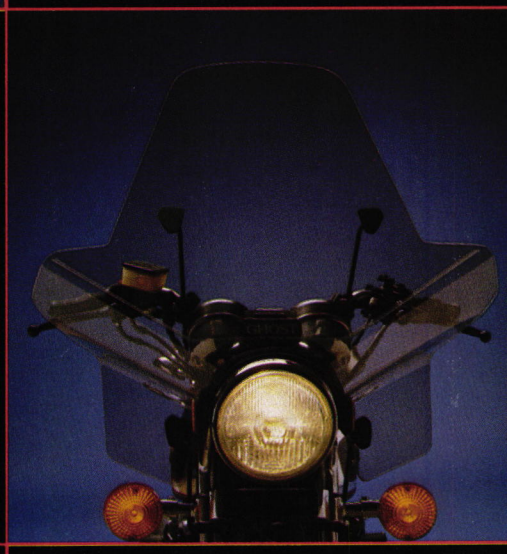
Windjammer®
The riders' choice 4 to 1 over the world's number two fairing. Twenty-eight lbs. of superb craftsmanship and design ingenuity. Over 24,000ccs of storage — that's 6 times more than the Hondaline Interstate fairing. When nothing but the best will do — step up to Windjammer.

Windstar™
Sporty good looks plus full touring protection. This 23 lb. aerodynamic fairing can turn your around-town bike into a tourer. Large (21,000 ccs) easy access storage compartments. Satin smooth paint finish along with all the other quality extras you'd expect from Vetter.



Quicksilver®
The world's most aerodynamic performance fairing. The racy Quicksilver adds only 11 lbs. to your bike yet actually improves its performance statistics and gas efficiency. Add the new Silver Sound radio option for the ultimate in motorcycle sound systems.

Ghost™
First to do it right... again. Vetter has brought quality and styling to the clear fairing market. Unique chemical bond attaches hardware to the fairing eliminating cracking from the bolt-through design used by the competition. A light tint comes standard to ensure maximum comfort.



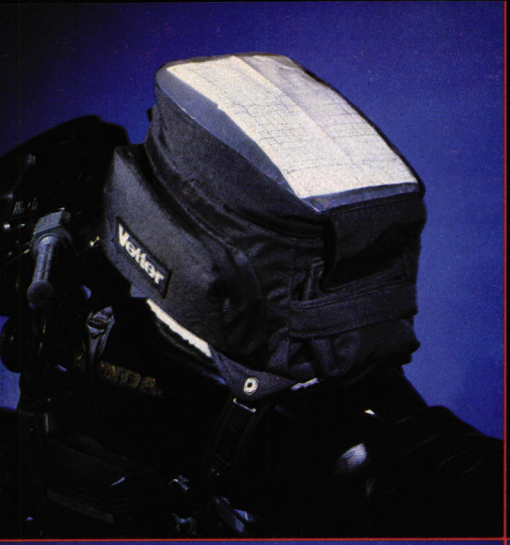
Rooster™
Fast and flashy. The only handlebar mounted fairing made of ABS plastic that is designed for a radio. Vetter's new Ultrasound with Pioneer speakers can set the mood for whatever you have in store.

Rooster-tail™
The sleek design blends in with your bike's lines but it can carry an amazing 12 standard 8 oz. cans. The patented soft mounting system makes installation on seats, racks or tanks a 5 minute job. Completely waterproof with a locking lid.

Vetter Vetter Vet

® Vetter Corporation 1983
Vetter Corporation
Rantoul, IL 61866

First to do it right



Tattoos™

These lightweight Cordura nylon bags feature an unbeatable design plus super hand craftsmanship. Each bag holds a full face helmet plus more. Watertight and built to last. Removable rain covers.

Vetter Tank Bag

Made to last of black Cordura nylon with double sewn seams. Two zippers on large main compartments for easy access. Thick fleece lined bottom. Vinyl map pouch. Rain cover for total weather-proofing.

Vetter Cycle Cover

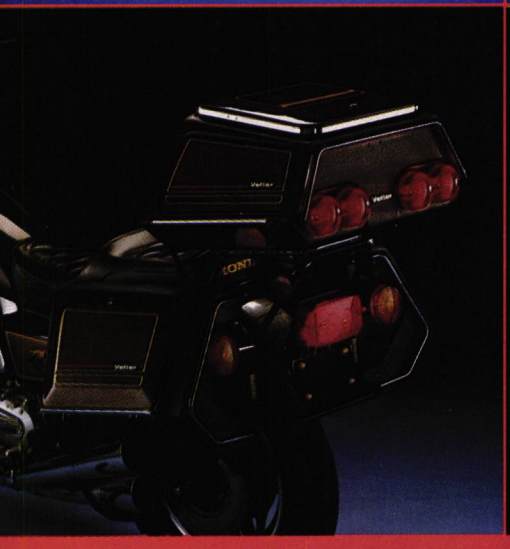
Protects your bike from the elements. Made of durable rip-stop nylon with elasticized bottom for a snug fit. Comes with a storage bag that goes inside the fairing compartment.

Vetterlite™

The ultimate in comfort in a full faced helmet. Luxurious grey velour interior. Chip resistant high gloss paint. Scratch resistant faceshield is guaranteed for one year. Unsurpassed performance in safety tests. Competitors are now copying Vetterlite features but charging $50 more.

Freedom™

Feels like you're wearing no helmet at all. The same luxurious interior as the Vetterlite conforms to your individual head shape. High visibility design. No clumsy snaps but rather a patented clip on visor. Optional faceshield is guaranteed scratch resistant for one year.

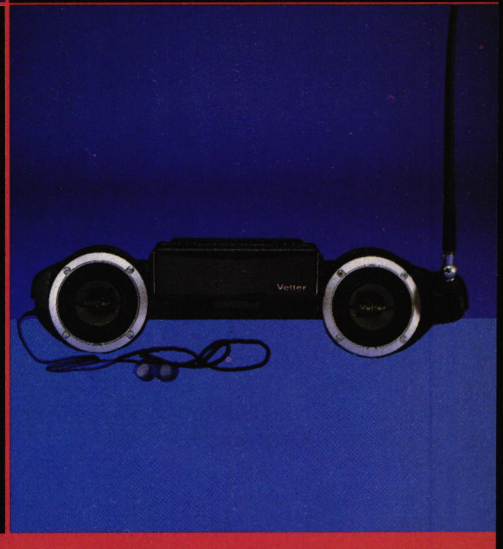


The Set-Up®

The Set-Up, Vetter's Saddlebags and Tail Trunk, looks like it was made for a motorcycle and carries a big load (over 100,000 ccs). The patented "floating-mount" custom hardware prevents any interference with your cycle's handling and the bags are detachable for easy loading and carrying.

Ultrasound™

Unique noise suppressor that filters out engine and electrical noise. Optional intercom jack allows you to add the new Vetter stereophones or choose our new wireless options and have a conversation with someone up to one quarter mile away. Highest quality Pioneer speakers. Sound cover comes standard.



ter Vetter Vetter

Function plus flair

THE CHAMPION GUARANTEE

IF YOU DON'T THINK YOUR ENGINE RUNS BETTER WITH FRESH CHAMPION SPARK PLUGS, WE WILL GIVE YOUR MONEY BACK.

CHAMPION

PERFORMANCE GUARANTEED

SPARK PLUGS

Champion adds another plus to 'COPPER PLUS'

The plug that sparked thirteen of fourteen World Grand Prix Championships can't guarantee a first place win every time. But we can guarantee your satisfaction every time you install 'Copper Plus' spark plugs in your bike.

How? If you don't think your engine runs better with fresh Champion spark plugs, we'll give your money back.* It's as simple as that.

Our new plus will help convince you that you can't buy a better spark plug for your bike than 'Copper Plus'. You've got our word for it.

Return plugs to Champion with proof of purchase within 60 days. Offer expires Aug. 31, 1983.

*Aviation/industrial plugs excepted.

RIDE AWARE. SHOW YOU CARE.
MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY COUNCIL, INC.

CHAMPION

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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

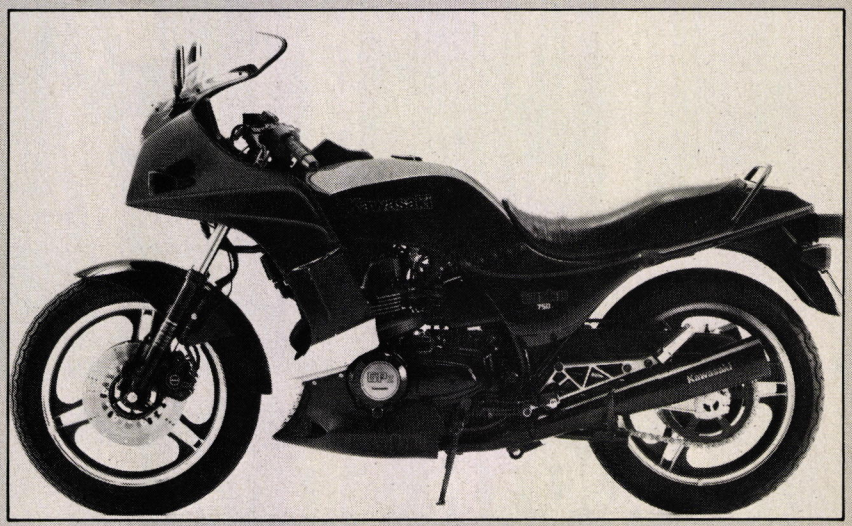
COMING SOON

• And Kawasaki makes four. When the KZ750T Turbo debuts later this year (you'll read about it first in CYCLE GUIDE), all of the Japanese bike factories will be in the boostbike business. Kawasaki's turbobike has changed somewhat since we previewed the prototype in our February '82 issue, and the biggest, most noticeable change is the bodywork; the Turbo now looks strikingly similiar to the '83 GPzs, save for the addition of lowers to the half-fairing. Many of the prototype Turbo's chassis features, like its wheels, anti-dive fork and Uni-Trak rear suspension, are common to the current GPz750—and we've told you how that bike handles. So with Kawasaki's reputation for high-performance engines, a turbocharged version just might be the best of the boostbike breed. We'll find out.

• Do you like the performance of Suzuki's biggest Katana but want a little more swoop in the styling? Well, Italy's Motoplast factory has introduced a kit to provide just that. The conversion parts include a fairing, tank/seat unit, crankcase enclosures and a new front fender. Quick-release Dzus fasteners secure the fairing and sidecovers. A second Motoplast kit also is offered for the Honda CB1100R and has the same features as the Katana kit; a fairing, tank/seat combo and such, but with an overall effect more like that of an endurance racer, complete with twin headlights.

• Harley-Davidson's new FXDG Special Edition Wide Glide hardly could be termed an endurance racer, but it does have something in common with Motoplast-kitted Katanas and CB1100Rs; it, too, is a styling exercise on an existing model. In fact, Harley's styling chief Willie G. Davidson thinks the FXDG is the most specially detailed Harley-Davidson ever. Perhaps the most striking styling touch on this burgundy-colored, belt-driven Wide Glide is its solid, brushed-aluminum, disc-style rear wheel. Other details on the FXDG include braided stainless-steel oil lines, both kick- and electric-start systems and 1919-style H-D logos on the gas tank and bobbed rear fender.

• Of course, vee-twin power isn't everyone's favorite motive force; there are thumper crazies to consider, too. To satisify that crowd, the EGLI design group of Switzerland is producing rolling chassis that accept Honda, Yamaha or Rotax single-cylinder engines. The bike also uses the latest Lockheed rim-disc front brake, with a conventional drilled-disc brake at the rear, and styling for the solo-seat single bears a strong Katana influence. That's not surprising; EGLI was involved in Suzuki's original Katana project.



Kawasaki will finally unleash its long-awaited force-fed 750

Just take a GPz750, add a turbo and more fairing bits, then stand back.

Harley didn't wait until '84 to bring out its newest version Wide Glide

Willie G. calls the FXDG the best one yet.

• Dropping down even further on the displacement scale, Ducati has a new 350cc machine available. The 350SL Desmo's 90-degree, SOHC vee-twin engine puts out approximately 40 horsepower at 9600 rpm, working through a five-speed transmission. Three 260mm Brembo disc brakes provide the stopping power. With the option of dual or solo seating, Ducati's 350 Desmo offers a measure of versatility to go with its single-purpose clip-on bars and rearset pegs.

• But if you like putting clip-ons and rearsets together yourself—along with the rest of the bike—maybe the Waddon Clubman Special will interest you. This British roadracer is sold in kit-form only, using a 250cc Rotax engine, Marzocchi fork, adjustable-deCarbon-shock rear suspension and triple Brembo brakes. And in order to finish off this little garage project, you'll have to mount the 18-inch Astralite wheels; they're in the packing crate along with everything else to complete the racer. Happy wrenching.

• The first Montesa/Honda has been announced. It's the MH349, the first bike to spring from Honda's 1982 manufacturing agreement with the Spanish Montesa factory.

Continued

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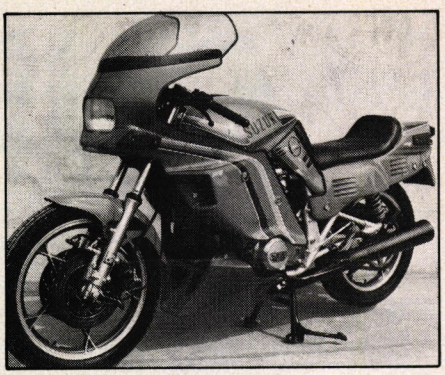
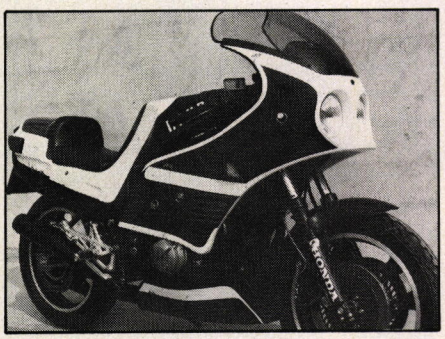


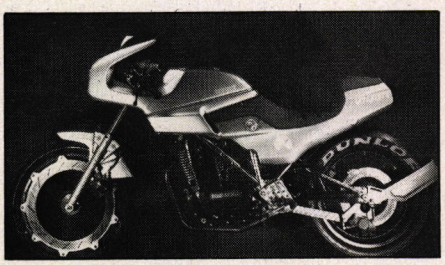
Taking the Muth-look from a Katana

Italy's Motoplast has the parts.



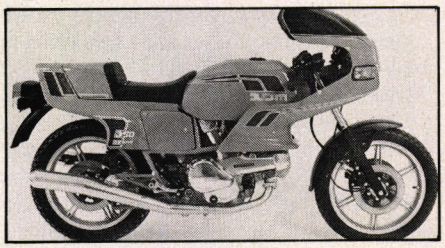
Italian fashion for the CB1100R

The look of long-distance racing.



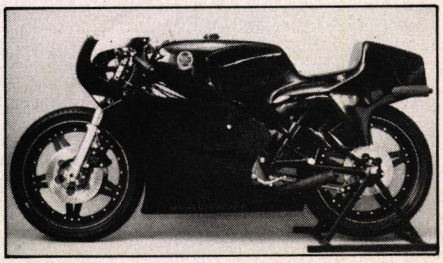
EGLI's single-barreled racer

Long winters keep the Swiss busy.



Ducati's 350 is a downsized Desmo

But with 40 horsepower, it's no Ducklet.



Waddon Eng.'s you-assemble-it racer

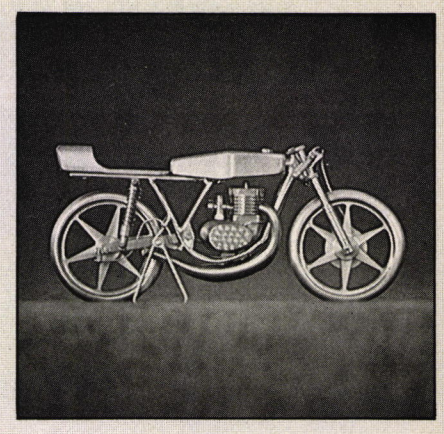
You can build it better than the Brits.

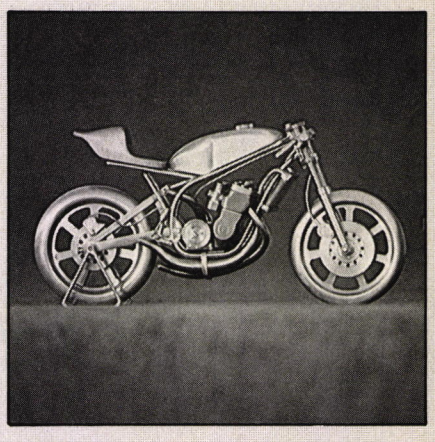
Continued

Miniatures:

The Work Of Lynn Hollis

One-of-a-kind replicas for the man who has everything.





• Catalogs from Tiffany, Van Cleef or Nieman Marcus are filled with exotic gifts for the man who has everything–except when that man is a motorcyclist. And if that motorcyclist also is an art connoisseur, especially of miniatures, those aforementioned catalogs will be of no value whatsoever. Because if it's an exotic–and expensive–motorcycle miniature that you're looking for, Lynn Hollis is the only source.

Hollis is a master craftsman/machinist/artist from Jeffersonville, Indiana. Two of his replicas shown here–a Honda MT125R2 and a Yamaha TZ750–attest that Hollis isn't making just ordinary models. His exclusive replicas, each one built to order, are handcrafted from bronze and brass, at a scale of 12:1. More than 100 hours of intricate lathe work, silver brazing, filing and forming are spent on each 6-inch model before it's finish-mounted on a walnut base, complete with an engraved plate. For a unique piece of desk-top art, there is nothing remotely comparable.

The detail is astounding; cylinders, cylinder heads, carburetors, brake discs and calipers–even countershaft and rear wheel sprokets–are reproduced in perfect scale proportion. The intricacy of the TZ's liquid-cooling system, its radiator and attendent plumbing, is replicated in brass and bronze. Almost everything on the miniatures is handmade; the only commercially available parts are the small screws used to put the bikes together.

But while Hollis' art won't be found in the pages of the Nieman Marcus catalog, the prices are what you might expect from that book: The TZ cost its owner a cool $1000. But if you have a checkbook able to handle those kind of numbers, and a need for a miniaturized Ducati, Vincent, NS500 or any bike, for that matter–even a replica of the machine in your garage–contact Lynn Hollis at 602 Webster Blvd., Jeffersonville, Indiana 47130. And rest assured that he'll build you a one-of-a-kind that Nieman Marcus couldn't come close to supplying–at any price.

–Joe Kress

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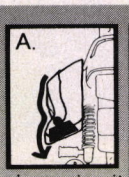
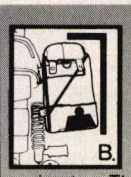
*Most soft saddlebags are pretty flimsy when empty. This makes it difficult to load your gear. And when packed, the load is poorly supported, causing it to sag and sway. Not only does this detract from the appearance of your motorcycle, it can seriously affect its handling. (See Fig. A)





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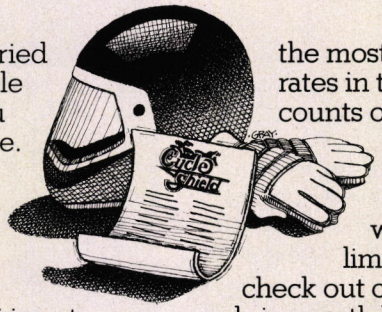

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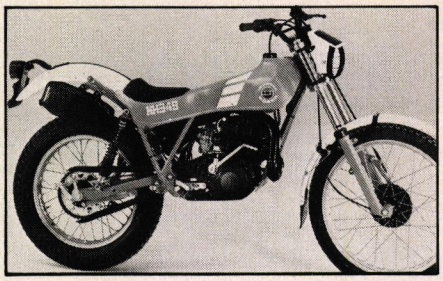

Honda/Montesa team unveils its first

The MH349 trials.

And although the new bike is all Montesa, technically it's a Honda, too, which in the eyes of the European Economic Community makes Honda a European manufacturer, thereby entitled to European trade benefits. Not a bad deal, both for Honda and Montesa.

FEDERAL CASES

• California state Senator Alan Robbins (D-Van Nuys) has introduced yet another bill to regain the $8.5 million taken from that state's Off-Highway Vehicle Fund and used to balance the state's budget. Robbins introduced a similiar bill last year, which was passed by the Senate but was defeated in the Assembly.

• Minnesota is the latest state to introduce legislation regulating the use of headphones while operating motor vehicles. House Bill 34 in that state proposes to allow headphone use while riding a motorcycle, but because the wording of the Bill states both ears may be covered, strong opposition from the insurance lobby is expected.

• The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has opened a regional office to serve the west-central states. The Foundation's new office (1303 North Rayburn Freeway, Sherman, Texas 75090) will handle motorcycle safety education for 11 states. Licensing projects, research and public information programs will be coordinated with MSF national headquarters in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.

HARD CASH

• Castrol Oil has posted $27,000 in contingency awards for this year's Camel Pro Series. The oil company's money, along with its product support, has been a fixture of the series for five years. Castrol's contingency program covers the first-, second- and third-place finishers in Formula 1, Formula 2, Superbike, Sidecar and Battle of the Twins roadraces, and Class C flattrack events. Additionally, there's a season-end championship award for each of the classes and a $1000 prize for the Grand National Champion.

• The payoff for this year's Wrangler Super Series isn't too bad, either: $103,750, split between the top 15 riders, the top mechanics and the rookie of the year. The number one Supercross/national MX finisher will pocket $30,000, with $15,000 for second and $10,000 for third. The payout for fourth through 15th

places ranges from $7,500 down to $1,250.

• That kind of money might sound inviting, but riding Supercross is just *one* way to make a profit from the sport. Tatum Communications Inc., of Venice, California, has found another way, by forming its Recreation Network, a syndicated programming service for broadcast and cable TV stations throughout the country. The Recreation Network's first offering will be the Miller High Life Supercross, taped in San Diego, California. CBS Sports broadcast a previous Supercross, and it had the highest rating for a sports show on that weekend. That rating translates into advertising dollars that riders can only dream about.

• Maico's worries are over, for the time being, at least. The West German manufacturer has, reportedly, just secured a massive bank loan to keep itself afloat. Last year the company sold only 6,000 machines; not enough to reach its break-even point, according to Maico officials. In addition to the bank loan, Maico has secured its survival with additional funds put up by several of its largest distributors, which have agreed to pay in advance for product delivery.

• The devaluation of England's pound sterling against the U.S. dollar has been causing sales problems for Harley-Davidson in Great Britain. Because of the exchange rate, prices of new H-Ds have been steadily rising, and annual sales

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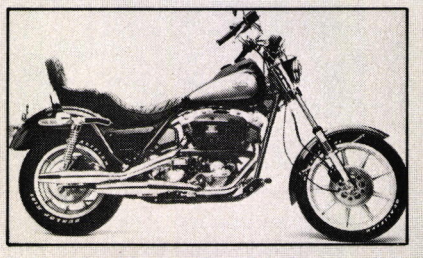
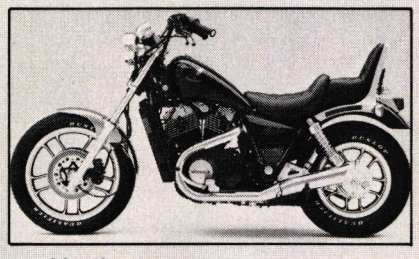
ITC Rules In Harley's Favor





Harley-Davidson refused to be over-Shadowed by the Japanese

But reportedly vee-twins aren't the issue—the future of the company is.

• In a move that could have far-reaching effects on the motorcycle industry both for manufacturers and aftermarket suppliers alike, the United States International Trade Commission (ITC) has ruled in favor of a petition by Harley-Davidson Motor Company. The petition, filed by Harley on September 1, 1982, sought what H-D executives term as "temporary relief from the growing number of foreign (predominately Japanese) motorcycles being shipped to the United States." That relief, recommended by the commission in a 2-to-1 vote, would come in the form of increased import duties on all assembled motorcycles, 700cc and larger, brought into this country. Under the proposal, the import duty during the first year of the relief program would be 49.4 percent, dropping to 39.4 percent for the second year, 24.4 percent in the third year, 19.4 percent for the fourth year and 14.4 percent in the fifth year, before returning to the current level of 4.4 percent.

The ITC's recommendations have been passed on to the White House for presidential review. President Reagan has 60 days in which to accept the recommendation, reject it, change the numbers or come up with a new proposal of his own.

Harley-Davidson's petition was based on the company's contention that it had been "severely injured" by the influx of abnormally large numbers of heavyweight Japanese motorcycles. H-D spokesmen claim that the Japanese big-four manufacturers, despite sagging motorcycles sales and the deepening recession have actually increased the number of machines imported into the United States, and now have an 18-month to two-year supply of product stored in this country. Vaughn Beals, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Harley-Davidson, has stated that the ITC's recommendation will give Harley-Davidson the time it needs to renovate and modernize its facilities and complete development on its new-generation motorcycles (a project on which the company already has spent $12 million).

This latest petition is the second time Harley-Davidson has sought legislative help against the Japanese motorcycle manufacturers. In response to a 1978 Harley petition, the U.S. Treasury Department determined that the Japanese were, indeed, selling motorcycles in this country at artificially low prices, but the ITC ruled that Harley-Davidson was not being damaged because the Japanese were not directly competing in Harley's market. Harley officials have maintained that the Japanese not only are competing in the traditional Harley market, but have launched an all-out attack to sink Harley-Davidson, by copying both the styles of Harley motorcycles and Harley marketing and advertising techniques. This time the International Trade Commission agreed.

"We always felt we had a good case," Beals said after the commission's ruling. His job, as he sees it now, is to make sure that President Reagan understands Harley's position as well as the ITC did. "We do not intend to prohibit the Japanese from competing in the American market," Beals has stated. "We only seek a fair and stable market in which to do business."

—Joe Kress

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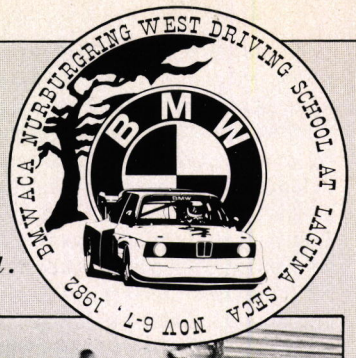

• For more than 20 years the BMW Clubs Of Europe have been hosting annual High-Speed Driving and Riding Schools, using the famed Nurburgring racetrack as a classroom. In this country, the BMW Automobile Club (BMW ACA) has been holding its own version of that school for 10 years, but up until last year it was for cars only—there was no motorcycle riding instruction offered. Now there is.

Rob Beach, of Beach's Motorcycle Adventures Ltd., has persuaded the BMW ACA to add bikes to its high-speed handling course, and the first combined car/motorcycle school was held last November at Monterey, California's Laguna Seca racetrack. Tom Lankard was an instructor at that first school and Don Pine had enrolled as a student; what follows are their impressions—the organizers'/instructors' aspirations and a student's/rider's feeling of what was gained. And while there were problems to overcome, the BMW ACA felt that the combined car/motorcycle school was successful enough to schedule another one. The next session is planned for the weekend of May 7th and 8th at Riverside Raceway, Riverside, California. Motorcycle participation will be limited to 40 students and the entry fee is $75. Those interested should contact Leif Anderberg of the BMW ACA at P.O. Box 401, Hollywood, California 90028, or call (213) 968-7755.

• I'd never thought of Laguna Seca as a classroom. The 1.9-mile, nine-turn track had, rather, been a Mecca for the roadracer in me. It always had been The Track I'd wanted to ride and in '81, my last season as a racer, I had my chance. But now I was returning to Laguna for another reason—to teach. The BMW Automobile Club of America was putting on its high-speed handling school and, for the first time, was including motorcycles. I had been recruited as an instructor and, since none of the riding schools in California taught what I consider to be high-performance street riding, I was hoping this might be the one. But to be honest, I wasn't optimistic. After all, I thought, what could I expect from a club, especially one that's never done anything like this before.

Rob Beach, the motorcycle coordinator, offered little encouragement. He had no curriculum, no idea of the facilities, no schedule and only two confirmed instructors. On the other hand, I thought, maybe these holes would be blessings in disguise; if no one knew what to do, or how to do it, we'd at least be starting with a clean slate. And so it was.

We used what I'll call a Darwinian approach; the school was just allowed to evolve, the participants being, essentially, guinea pigs. First one idea would be tried, then another; the reactions being the gauge of effectiveness. We'd look to see what was missing, find it, and then provide it. When, for example, we discovered that some students didn't know anything about apexing or even about the existence of a corner's line, we explained that, showing what they were and their significance. And when we found a wide range of skill-levels in the students, we did a quick about-face and ran everyone through a classifying exercise. Those classed as experts were allowed more freedom during track sessions, with instruction available (most took it). The rest were treated as novices and given instruction without having to ask. And when we found that two instructors weren't enough, a few of the experts

• "I don't want to see anyone blowing me into the weeds."

BMW racer and chief instructor Reg Pridmore didn't really expect any of us street riders standing at the side of the track to challenge him in the corners. He was simply reinforcing the two known facts of the coming weekend: This was *not* a racing school, and by the end of the two days, a group of car drivers had to be convinced that it's reasonable to put streetbikes on a racetrack.

Most of us knew we were guinea pigs in an experiment. The BMW Automobile Club of America (BMW ACA) had added motorcycles to its biannual, high-performance driving school and we were the first class. For two decades the European BMW club had run a combined bike and car school at the Nurburgring racetrack in Germany and "Nurburgring West" followed the outline of the European model. But the BMW ACA had 10 years experience teaching handling techniques to the four-wheelers and none with bikes. Pridmore, motorcycle coordinator Rob Beach and 42 student/riders were on our own to search for a consensus on what European-style, high-performance riding really meant.

The only constant was the BMW marque. Differences between models like the touring R100RT and the café R90S weren't as significant as the diversity in the riders. Choosing the proper gear, braking point or line were abilities students had to varying degrees. Some of us were aware of what we were doing, but most simply were pressing old habits to their limits.

The opportunity to tackle a demanding road like Laguna, with the guarantee that a Porsche or a bread truck wouldn't be coming around the corner, gave us a chance to look closely at those habits we might have been taking for granted. This freedom of the track was pointed out in Pridmore's "golden rule", which can't be used on the street but is essential on the track: Concentrate on what you're doing first, *then* watch out for the other guy. At first, that seemed to work fine, but soon Laguna's chicanes began to fill up like bottlenecks in rush-hour traffc. Freeway riders watched their tachs climb above 5000 rpm for the first time, and then achieved new heart-rates when canyon racers passed them in tight corners.

Realigning the school took discipline and close supervision. Borrowing an idea from the German school, Pridmore and Beach broke us into smaller groups, each under tight control by one of the instructors. And in the smaller groups, street-riding prejudices were easy to spot. Brakes were underused before corners and overused in them, and with the entire track's width available, most riders stayed away from the edges as if they couldn't stop imagining oncoming bread trucks. Gradually, we all gained a surer sense of the track and ourselves, and the BMW sound of applied performance—scraping cylinders—increased.

The results of the two days were impressive. Speed, with close attention to consis-

were drafted to help out.

Although no formal curriculum ever was developed, a method of teaching was. Each instructor was given five or six riders to first lead and then follow around, showing technique and then judging progress. Immediately after each track session, a debriefing took place in the paddock. We found the most common weakness was a reluctance to use all that was available, both from the road and the bike. It was this we had to work hardest to overcome because, far from releasing the closet peg-scraper in the students, the circumstances seemed to intimidate them. Privately, we had feared we'd end up with a bunch of hot-hands tearing up the track—and themselves. We needn't have worried; the instinct for self-preservation took care of it for us.

And with that instinct working for us we found it not at all difficult to teach high-performance street riding without, at the same time, teaching roadracing. The students weren't there to learn how to race, just how to be better riders. Our goal had been to provide more than simply a chance to get out on a racetrack and gas it. And from the response, both at the track and in the mail received since, we succeeded. But more importantly, we learned how to run a school; learned, even, that it could be done. We now know the best student/teacher ratio; the teaching basics which first have to be covered; what racing techniques can be used and what cannot. We'll be putting all this to work in the next scheduled sessions.

I arrived at Laguna Seca a skeptic—but left a convert. There is a middle ground between the Learn How To Ride School and the School of WFO Knee Scraping—and we found it.

–Tom Lankard

tency and control—not a bad definition of high-performance riding—began to replace the nerve of the hot shoe as well as the fear of the touring rider. The car drivers watching gained something, too; a few of them took some laps on the back of the bikes, and by Sunday night, no one in the BMW ACA could be found who thought motorcyclists were less than serious about their sport.

But the final assessment rests on how much of the steadiness gained on the track made it to the street. I asked myself that question as I rode home through the Big Sur section of California's Highway 1. I didn't notice any increase in speed—just confidence. As I looked at the corners I saw a predictable relationship between power, braking and leaning, something I had only felt my way through after 15 years of street experience. Translating Pridmore's rules to street, I found myself concentrating more on what I was doing—*and* watching for those bread trucks.

–Donald Pine

Continued

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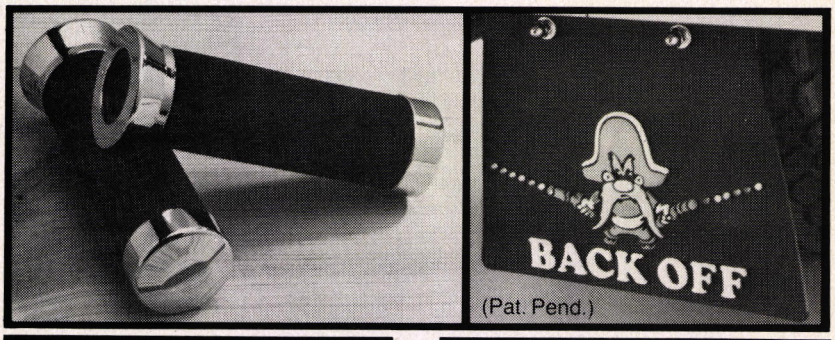

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have fallen below the 200-unit mark. Hoping to stabilize the price somewhat, the Milwaukee manufacturer has stopped dealing with its long-time importer, Coburn and Hughes, and now will sell machines directly to individual dealerships. Right now, the least-expensive Harley-Davidson sold in Great Britain is the XLH Sportster, at more than $7,000.

RUMORS

• Midsized sportbikes might not be what you'd expect to see on the drawing boards of Milwaukee, the town that made cruiservees famous, but corporate insiders wink when they say the company hasn't been standing still for the last few years. In fact, those same insiders readily admit that the ITC suit was aimed more at protecting the future of some new machines than it was at saving the Wide Glide. And the sizes of these whispered-about sportbikes? It's no secret that the company has been hinting at a 500, but now we're beginning to hear about actual engine configurations for this machine, and our H-D man tells us not to think only of a vee-twin. Vee-four 500s, anyone?

• That same Milwaukee insider tells us that, while Harley-Davidson never will forsake its venerable Big Twin, the engine might be undergoing some changes—fast. What kind of changes he won't specify, except to say we might want to start thinking about an entirely new powerband—and maybe stop thinking about pushrods.

• Of course, not all the industry gossip is about streetbikes, and some of the new equipment we're hearing about will take a little more work to spot—like first cleaning the mud off a motocrosser. If our source is correct, and his track record gives us no reason to doubt it, Kawasaki might have some company with disc-brakes on dirt bikes. And this back-shop informant also hints that the MX-style discs might not be limited to only the front wheel.

• And from yet another source we're hearing that the type of brakes might not be the only thing new on some soon-to-appear MXers. We're beginning to hear talk that might indicate a thumper war is nearing. We're told, and this was really confidential, that at least one major manufacturer is well along with development of its four-stroke motocrosser—and taking it very seriously, too. This new thumper, we're told, has had some unique engine designing to get its weight right down to the two-stroke level. You might want to start looking for earplugs now.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• Names can be dangerous, especially when you don't speak the language. The Japanese manufacturers, in light of their move toward naming (Shadow, Virago, Spectre, et al.) instead of numbering their bikes, would do well to heed General Motors' lesson from the Sixties. GM had

Wheelie King assaults the Indy 500

With a 100-mile-long monowheel ride.

just introduced its Nova model, with hopes for excellent worldwide sales. And the car did well—everywhere except South America. Despite its size and power advantages, the Nova consistently was outsold by the competition. At first this baffled GM officials, who could see no reason for the sales failure. Then someone stumbled onto the fact that in most South American countries, Nova has no meaning at all, except when translated as "No va." Which means "doesn't go."

• But in this country, a new bike's name isn't as important as its price tag and finding the money to buy it. However, if you want a new motorcycle and care to bypass the monetary problems altogether, spring for a ticket to any one of the eight Great American Motorcycle Shows; the door prize at each show is a new XLH Sportster. The prize bikes are limited-edition customs by the H-D factory, covered in a red, white and blue pearl finish. If you're one of the winners, you'll have saved yourself an estimated $6500, the retail value of each Sportster.

• And those lucky winners will, most likely, keep their new Sportsters down on two wheels, something Wheelie King Doug Domokos didn't even come close to doing during his stunt work for the film "The Cannonball Run." But that high-speed, unicycle pass for the camera was only a few hundred yards long, and Domokos has something a little longer in mind for Memorial Day weekend. Once again working in front of the cameras, this time for a national TV audience, Domokos is planning a 100-mile-long wheelie. His "Wheelie 100," as he's calling it, is scheduled as part of the pre-race festivities for the Indianapolis 500. Now a wheelie that long will be difficult enough, but the most interesting part should be the refueling: To keep his CR250 in premix for the distance, a truck will pull up alongside Domokos and someone will pass him a hose to fill up his tank—while the wheelie still is in progress. Stay tuned. Film at eleven. ●

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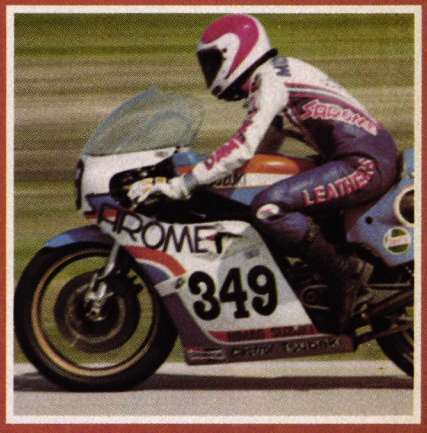

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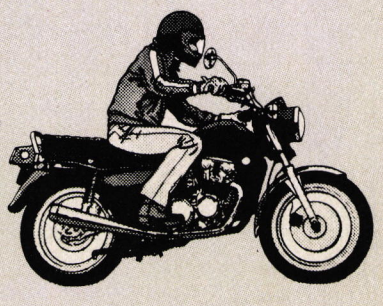

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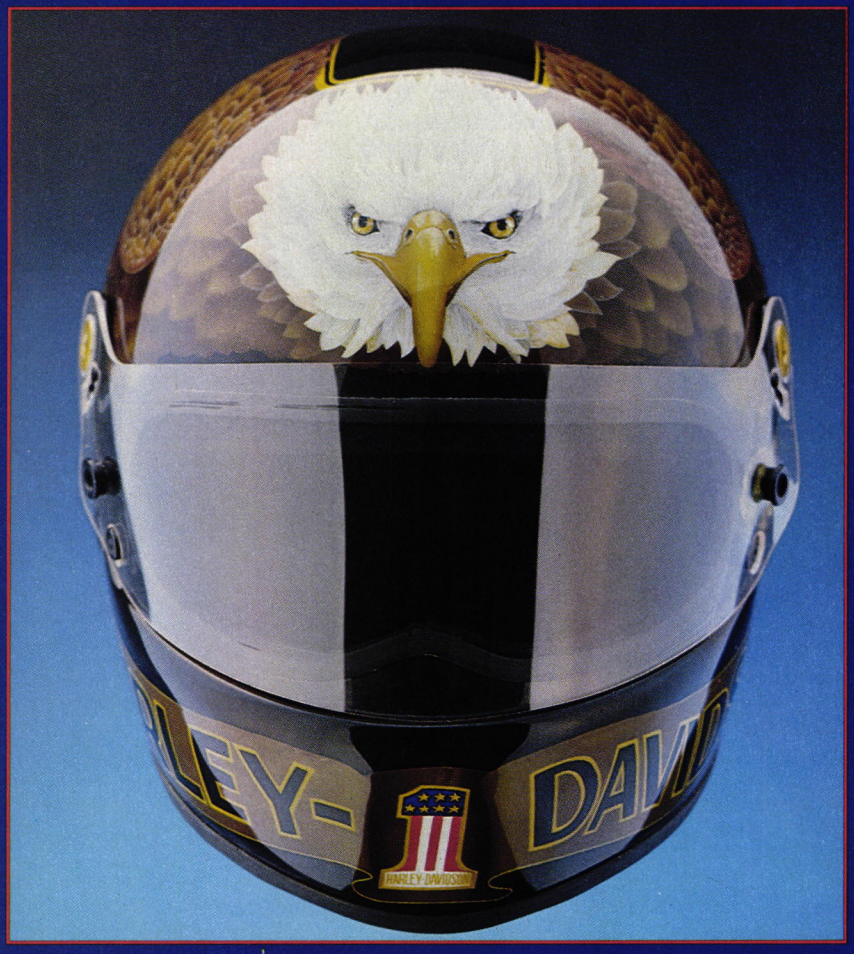
HAT TRICKS:

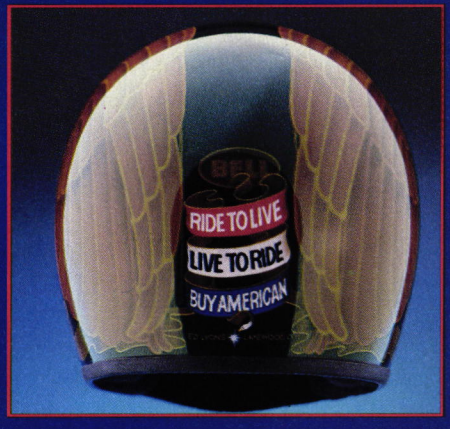
Helmet Heraldry, Part II

In which the winners are, appropriately, crowned.

You've waited long enough. Hundreds of you entered CYCLE GUIDE's Design-Your-Own-Helmet Contest, and it's finally time to announce the results—better yet, to show the winning designs, transformed from the original two-dimensional artwork into three-dimensional on-the-road headgear.

Each of the five winning entries shows what we feel is definitive heraldry, helmet art that will elevate the wearer out of the ordinary and into the eye-catching class. And while we *did* select a grand prize entry, the distinction is a fine one, since only fame—not fortune—separates it from the other finalists; the prize in each case is the same: a custom-painted helmet in a limited edition of one. Although the five designs run the graphic gamut from simple to ornate, they all have one thing in common: From where we sit, they're all winners.





Grand Prize Winner

Edward T. Lyons
Lakewood, Ohio

Despite the problems in selecting only five finalists in the contest, the choice for first place was easy. Lyons' intricate design is nothing short of art. The entry was a clear winner, but it posed its own problem: Who was going to paint it? In the end, Lyons himself did the work, learning to air brush in order to handle the task. Every inch of the helmet is used in the complex design, a soaring American bald eagle. Detail on the first-place helmet is fantastic, down to elaborate points of the eagle's beak, eyes and feathers. The fine work on the winning helmet is so elaborate that it would almost be a shame to expose it to the harsh realities of weather. But whether or not Lyons' masterpiece ever sees real-world use, it is a sure winner.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 VIC HUBER

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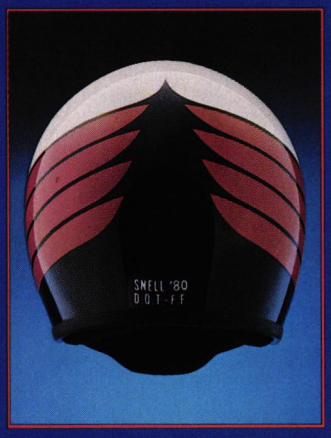
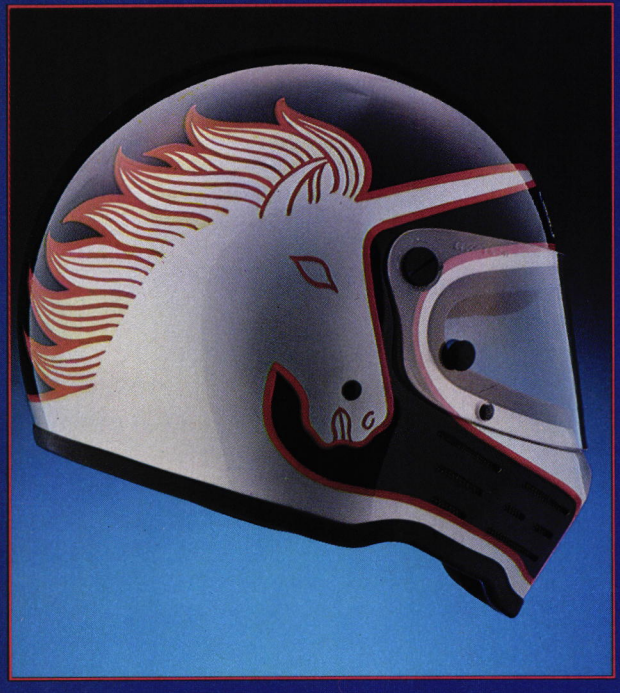
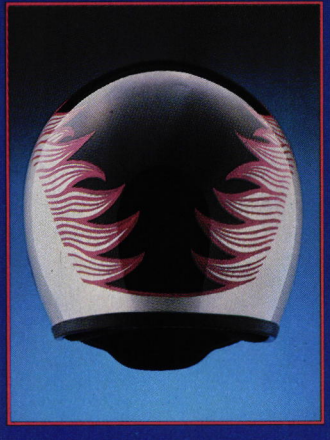
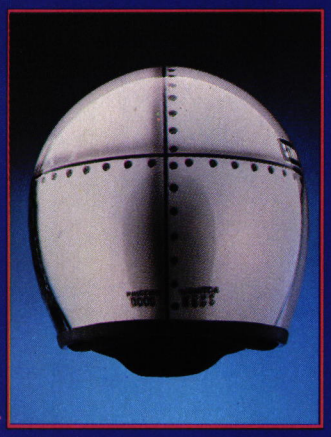


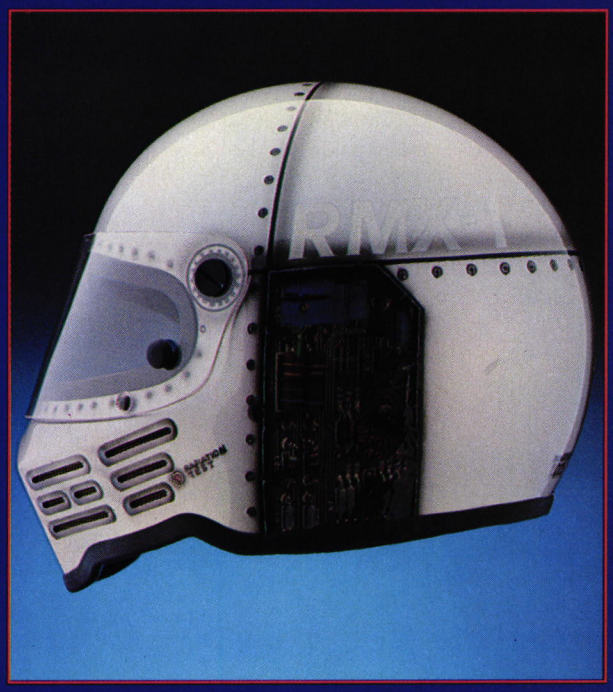
Andrew P. Will
La Mirada, California
Will's design, applied to a Simpson Model 32, made its way into the finals for a variety of reasons, chief among them being its clean, simple appearance. If any of the winning helmets went rushing past you at 60 per or so, this would be the one you'd notice. The sloped striping makes good use of the natural shape of the helmet by extending the graphic theme of the vents. The color choice is effective, too; just the kind of bold treatment you could expect to see on a racetrack.



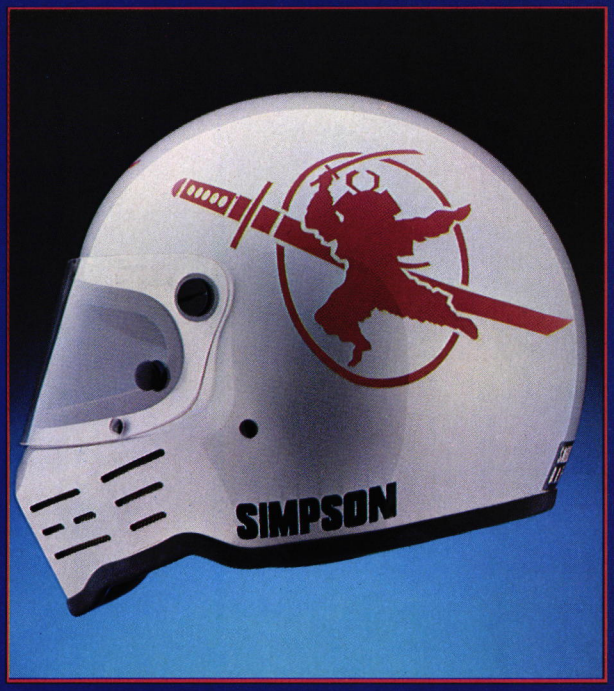


Steve Williams
Memphis, Tennessee
What part of a motorcycle helmet looks like the foreleg of a unicorn? If you're contest finalist Steve Williams, the answer is obvious: the jaw-piece of a Simpson Model 32. His use of the helmet's shape to complete the design attracted the judges' attention, but that wasn't the only item in this design's favor. The unicorn shape is complex but still an "easy read." And because the horn extends forward and wraps around the front of the helmet, the design can be repeated on the other side for a pleasing symmetry.





Robert Porter
Des Plaines, Illinois
Porter's use of simple details—screw heads, shadows on the "seams" and the impression of three-dimensionality on the helmet vents—to make a major change in the helmet's overall appearance, netted him a slot with the rest of the finalists. Even though the effect probably will be lost on the casual viewer, up close the look of hand-formed aluminum is nothing short of riveting. And the view inside the "access panel" on the helmet's left side adds a macabre twist.



Ian Birch
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England
More than anything else, Birch's application of a stylized logo got him into the finals. The three elements,-a samurai warrior, dragon (replete with fiery breath) and Suzuki "S"-are tied together by a single graphic device, a circle. Not one of the emblems is lifted straight off of a Suzuki, but the intent is clear: This is a helmet to be worn with a Katana. And although the designs themselves are relatively intricate, they're still readable, since the rest of the helmet is left unadorned.

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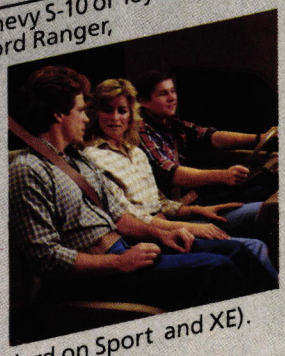

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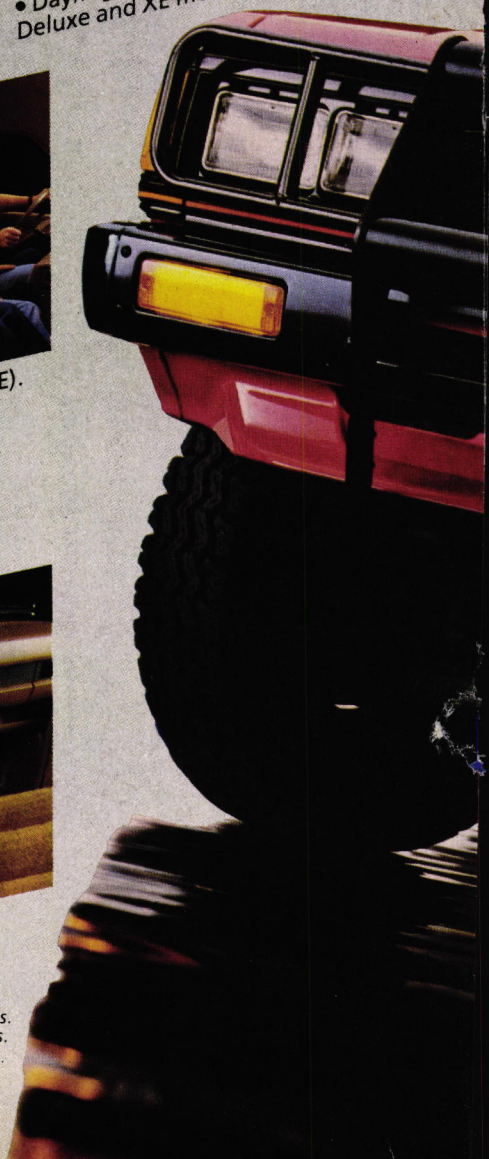

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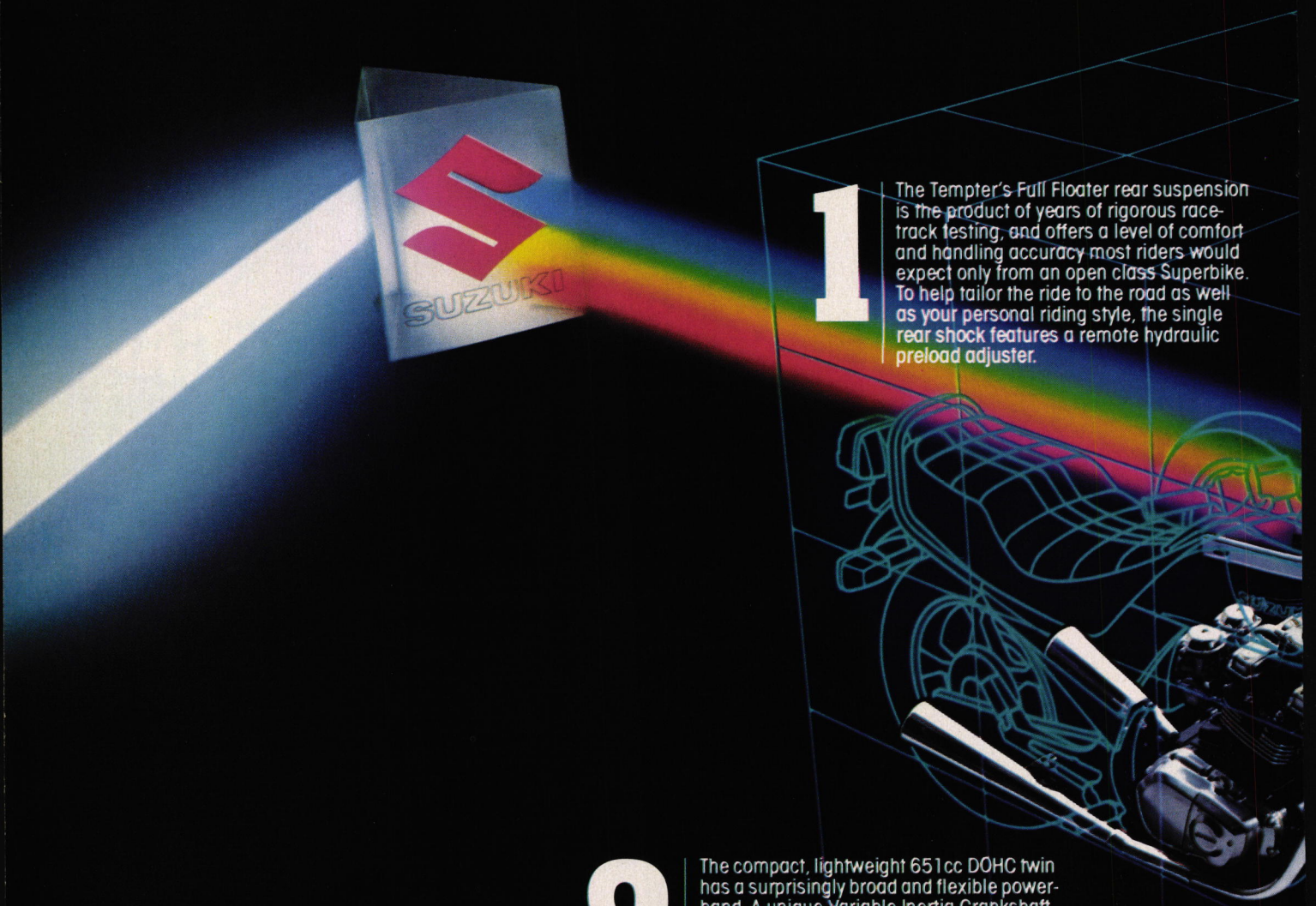
KING CAB

NISSAN NISSAN

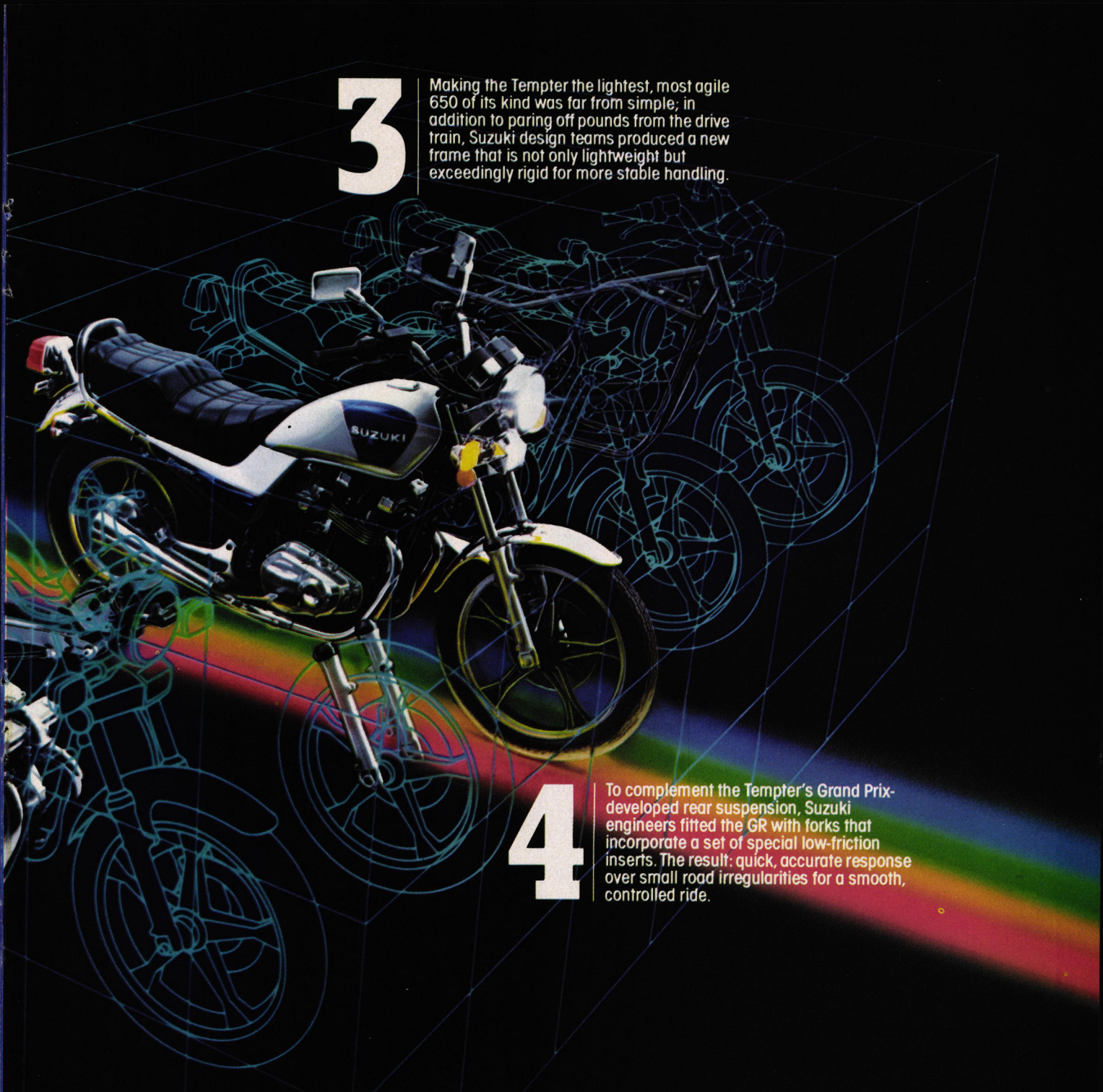


1 The Tempter's Full Floater rear suspension is the product of years of rigorous race-track testing, and offers a level of comfort and handling accuracy most riders would expect only from an open class Superbike. To help tailor the ride to the road as well as your personal riding style, the single rear shock features a remote hydraulic preload adjuster.

2 The compact, lightweight 651cc DOHC twin has a surprisingly broad and flexible power-band. A unique Variable Inertia Crankshaft offers both strong pulling power at low rpm and quick acceleration in the upper rev ranges. Plus, Suzuki's Twin Dome Combustion Chamber (TDCC) design and Air Induction System work together to give the GR some of the best gas mileage figures of any 650 on the road.

Suzuki introduces state-of-the-art tradition.

3 Making the Tempter the lightest, most agile 650 of its kind was far from simple; in addition to paring off pounds from the drive train, Suzuki design teams produced a new frame that is not only lightweight but exceedingly rigid for more stable handling.



4 To complement the Tempter's Grand Prix-developed rear suspension, Suzuki engineers fitted the GR with forks that incorporate a set of special low-friction inserts. The result: quick, accurate response over small road irregularities for a smooth, controlled ride.

The classic vertical twin. For decades it was respected for both its gut-level pulling power as well as its cat-like agility.

But today it means something more. Today it means the Suzuki GR-650 Tempter. Because the Tempter boasts not only the torque and nimble handling of yesterday's traditional roadsters, but the smoothness and sophistication of today's modern Superbikes.

What's more, the Tempter means down-to-earth technology. Technology to give this sporting machine an ultra-low overall weight. A performance-boosting Variable Inertia Crankshaft. Confidence-inspiring Full Floater rear suspension. And something no other large-displacement twin can hope to offer: the performance and features of the best 650 roadster...for about the price of a good 450.

GR-650 Tempter **GR-650X Tempter**

The 1983 GR650 and GR650X, like all GS, GN, and GR street bikes, include Suzuki's famous 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. Offered only in the 48 contiguous United States and Alaska. Refer to U.S. Suzuki's "Limited Warranty Policy" for additional information. A similar warranty is offered in Canada.

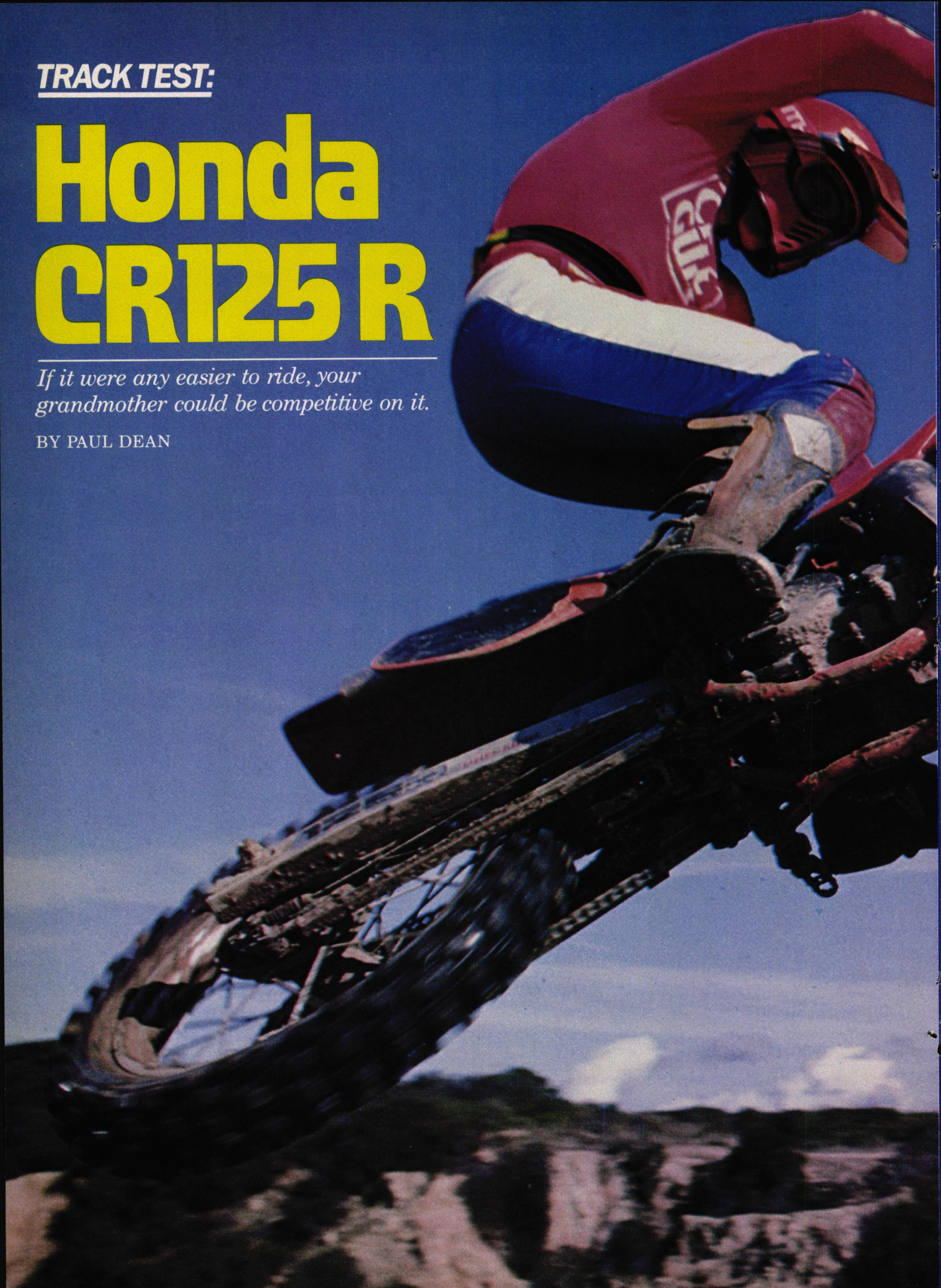
UNLIMITED 12 MONTHS MILEAGE

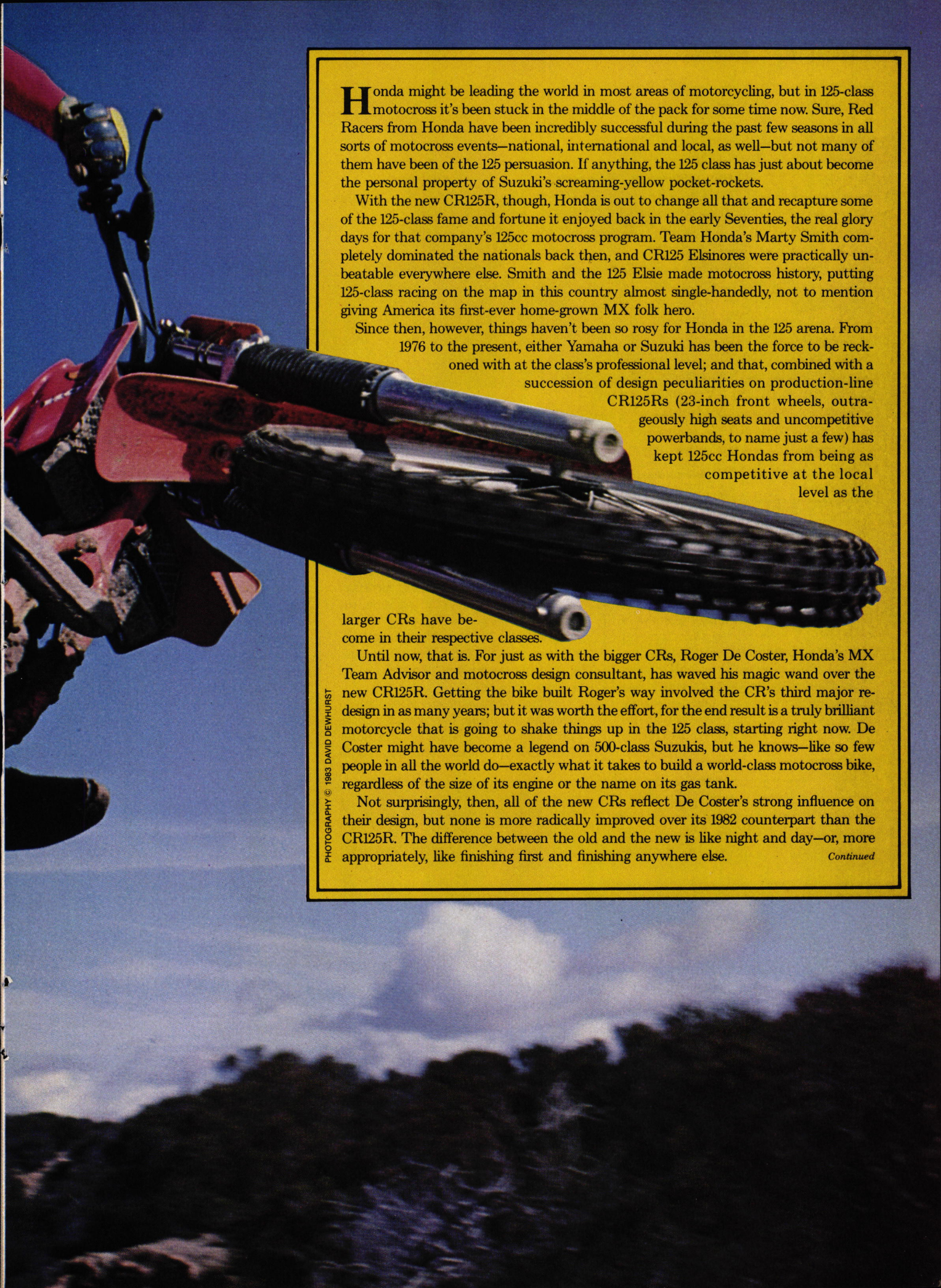
TRACK TEST:

Honda CR125R

If it were any easier to ride, your grandmother could be competitive on it.

BY PAUL DEAN





Honda might be leading the world in most areas of motorcycling, but in 125-class motocross it's been stuck in the middle of the pack for some time now. Sure, Red Racers from Honda have been incredibly successful during the past few seasons in all sorts of motocross events—national, international and local, as well—but not many of them have been of the 125 persuasion. If anything, the 125 class has just about become the personal property of Suzuki's screaming-yellow pocket-rockets.

With the new CR125R, though, Honda is out to change all that and recapture some of the 125-class fame and fortune it enjoyed back in the early Seventies, the real glory days for that company's 125cc motocross program. Team Honda's Marty Smith completely dominated the nationals back then, and CR125 Elsinores were practically unbeatable everywhere else. Smith and the 125 Elsie made motocross history, putting 125-class racing on the map in this country almost single-handedly, not to mention giving America its first-ever home-grown MX folk hero.

Since then, however, things haven't been so rosy for Honda in the 125 arena. From 1976 to the present, either Yamaha or Suzuki has been the force to be reckoned with at the class's professional level; and that, combined with a succession of design peculiarities on production-line CR125Rs (23-inch front wheels, outrageously high seats and uncompetitive powerbands, to name just a few) has kept 125cc Hondas from being as competitive at the local level as the larger CRs have become in their respective classes.

Until now, that is. For just as with the bigger CRs, Roger De Coster, Honda's MX Team Advisor and motocross design consultant, has waved his magic wand over the new CR125R. Getting the bike built Roger's way involved the CR's third major redesign in as many years; but it was worth the effort, for the end result is a truly brilliant motorcycle that is going to shake things up in the 125 class, starting right now. De Coster might have become a legend on 500-class Suzukis, but he knows—like so few people in all the world do—exactly what it takes to build a world-class motocross bike, regardless of the size of its engine or the name on its gas tank.

Not surprisingly, then, all of the new CRs reflect De Coster's strong influence on their design, but none is more radically improved over its 1982 counterpart than the CR125R. The difference between the old and the new is like night and day—or, more appropriately, like finishing first and finishing anywhere else.

Continued

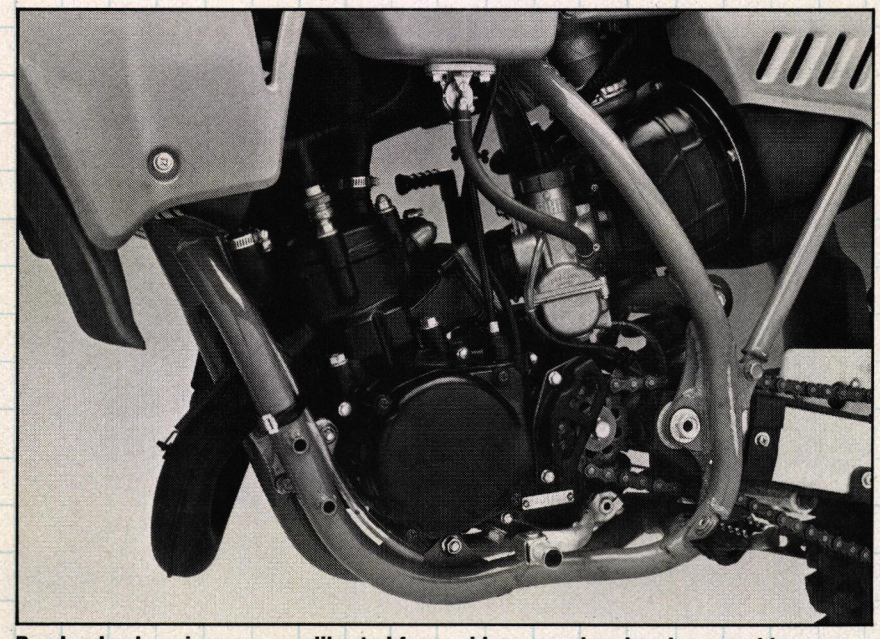
PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

TECH INSPECTION:

ENGINE:

Many riders felt that last year's CR125R was too pipey, so the new engine was tuned to deliver more midrange. The entire exhaust port was shifted downward 0.3mm, the four main transfer ports were enlarged by both raising their top and lowering their bottom edges, and the two booster transfers that extend upward from the bridged intake port were raised 1.2mm. There's a completely new pipe (with a small aluminum silencer) that also bolsters the midrange power, plus a higher compression ratio (8.6:1 vs. 8.3:1) and a two-degree reduction in total ignition advance (necessitated by the raised compression). Also new this year is a little metal deflector in the intake manifold that improves the flow of incoming air by directing it away from the sharp corners of the six-petal reed block. In addition, the delivery rate of the cooling system's water pump was cut by more than 10 percent, which fractionally improves performance by reducing the amount of power needed to drive the pump.

Cooling-system refinements also helped make the '83 engine two pounds lighter. The water pump's impeller and outer cover both are plastic, and the overall mass of the cylinder casting was reduced through the use of smaller water-jacketing. The cooling-system capacity is down 45cc from the '82 CR's, and a slimmer water-pump design allows the engine to be 14mm narrower at its widest point.



Reed-valved engine was recalibrated for a wider powerband and more midrange

Down on raw power but up in pure tractability.

DRIVETRAIN:

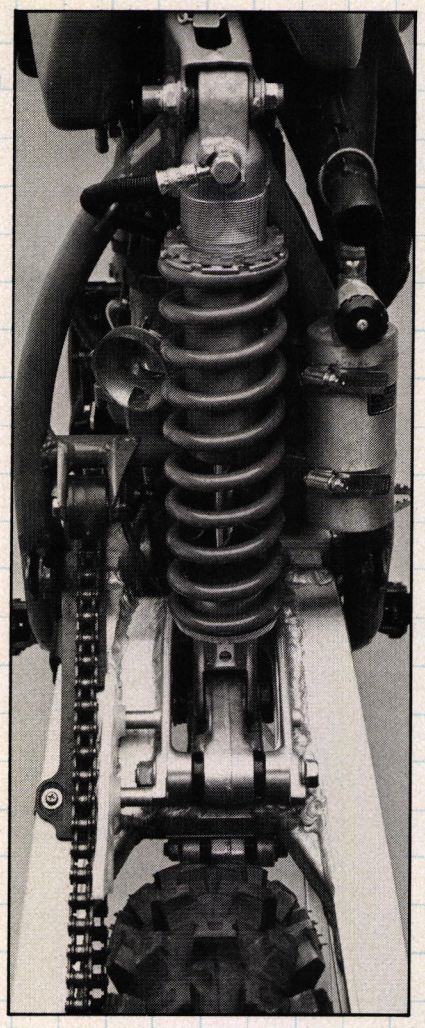
A more obvious change to the '83 CR is that its No. 520 drive chain is now on the left. Both the chain and the rear brake had been on the right side since the 1979 model-year to make for a lighter rear hub; but advances in wheel technology, plus a need to tuck-in the rear-brake linkage so the bike could be narrower at the footpegs, prompted the designers to move the chain back to the left. Which meant that everything inside the engine—clutch, ignition, water pump, transmission-gear location—had to swap sides, making the new motor virtually a mirror-image of the old one. The rear hub is no heavier as a result of the switch, but the kickstarter gears now are on the same (right) side of the engine as the steel kick lever, so the kickstarter shaft is considerably shorter and lighter.

The '83 CR also has a few new ratios that complement the improved midrange power. The primary gearing is taller, as are the ratios for third and fourth gears. And for increased durability, all the transmission gears are wider, the shift forks are shorter and the clutch is new. There now are just 10 clutch plates instead of 12, but their outside diameter was increased 15mm to yield more overall friction area than before. The plain clutch-plates now are aluminum instead of steel, which saves considerable weight, and the fiber plates have a higher asbestos content to prevent them from swelling when hot. The clutch also uses rubber shock-cushioners instead of the coil-spring type.

CHASSIS:

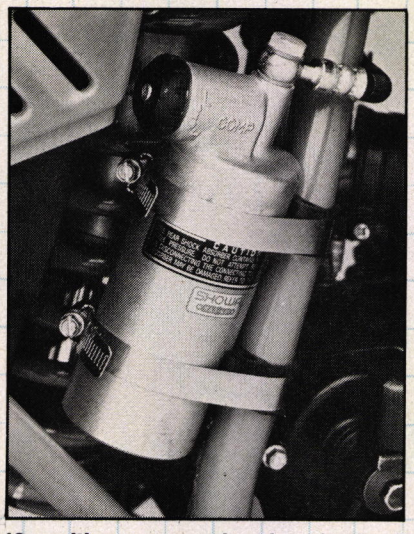
Frame: With the help of the lighter engine, the CR's redesigned chassis results in a bike that is six pounds lighter this year. The 125 also has a 2-inch-lower seat and slowed-down steering geometry. The steering angle is now 27.2 degrees instead of 26, the trail is up from 98mm to 105mm, and the wheelbase is 10mm longer. The twin radiators sit 50mm lower, contributing to a lowered center of gravity, and the 125, just like the bigger CRs, has a quick-detach rear subframe that can be removed in less than a minute to gain access to the rear shock.

Wheels: The CR's hubs are slightly narrower for '83 and lace with straight-pull spokes to new DID serrated-bead rims. But the overall weight of the wheels is re-



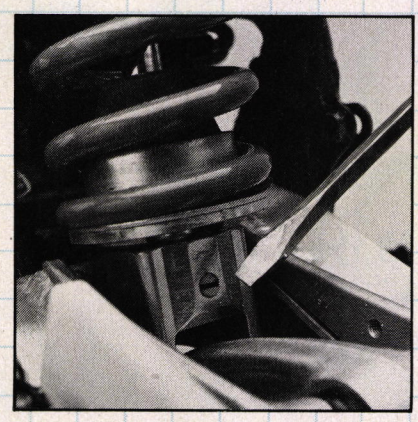
Removing subframe puts shock in open

Just like a built-in Showa workstand.



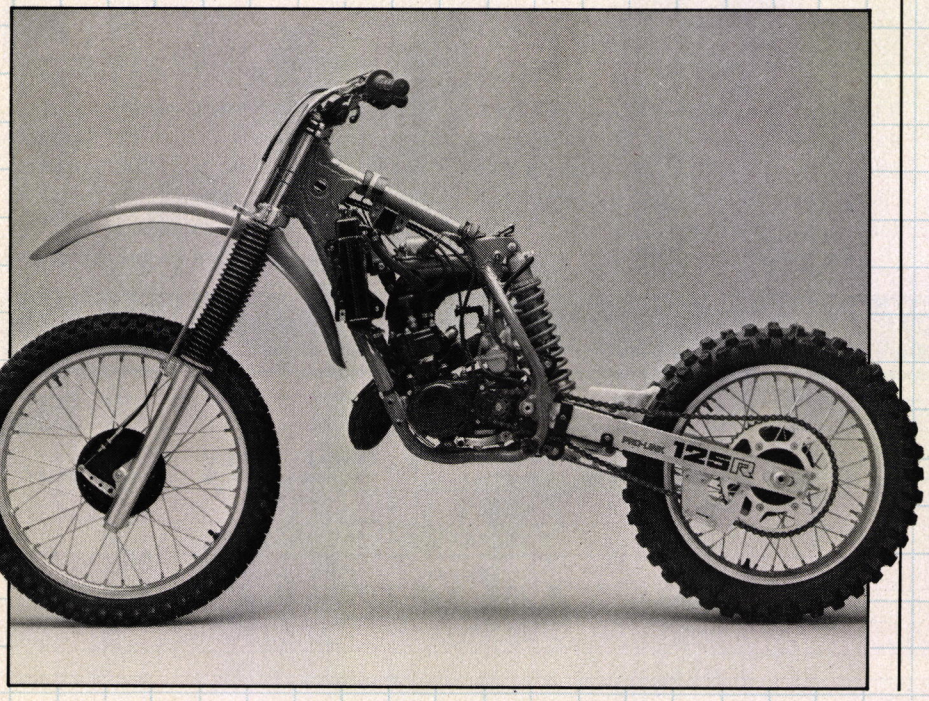
12-position compression-damping knob

For dial-a-ride rear suspension.



Rebound-damping screw has 30 clicks

But only the first 20 have any effect.



duced only because both are shod with the latest Bridgestone motocross tires that are fractionally lighter than last year's knobbies. The brakes, too, are narrower and thus have less swept area, and the front brake still is the single-leading-shoe type. But an increase in the leverage of the front-brake linkage nets more stopping power for any given amount of pressure at the lever.

SUSPENSION:

Front: The CR125R still uses a 38mm Kayaba fork with adjustable compression damping, but there are significant differences between the '82 and '83 versions. The new fork has 5mm less travel, is 13mm shorter (both part of the seat-lowering process) and uses 14 percent softer springs; and whereas last year's compression-damping adjuster had just three detented settings, this year's has no detent and is infinitely variable within eight turns of the adjusting screw located in the bottom end of each slider.

Rear: The rear wheel also has 5mm less travel, for the same reason as the front. The geometry of the Pro-Link system, which now uses a lighter swingarm and linkage components made of forged aluminum rather than forged steel, has been revised for the third straight year. It now delivers a lower overall wheel-to-shock leverage ratio and a less-progressive rising rate at the rear wheel. The shock itself is lighter and has a 10.5mm shorter stroke, despite being 26.5mm longer. The decrease in leverage allows a shock spring that is lighter in weight and 27 percent softer in rate. And Honda has two optional shock springs available—one eight percent stiffer and one eight percent softer.

Last year's CR offered only four-way adjustable compression damping at the rear; this year's has a 12-position compression-adjuster knob on the bladder-type shock reservoir, plus a 20-position rebound-damping adjuster screw on the shock body itself.

DETAILS:

Even the 1.7-gallon gas tank helps lower the *cg* by carrying some of its fuel in a portion that extends downward on the left side. The new seat is bright blue, extends up the rear of the tank like those pioneered by Yamaha last year, and it has a one-piece seamless cover designed to resist premature ripping.

In addition, the chain guide is more rugged, the steel plates that screw to the swingarm around the axle holes are thicker and the footpegs now are steel instead of cast iron.

Continued

• Obviously, no motorcycle can turn you into another Roger De Coster; but the CR125R is so competent, so confidence-inspiring, so able to bring out the best in anyone who rides it, that it makes you *feel* like De Coster. No matter how aggressively it is ridden, the CR refuses to misbehave in any way. It simply does exactly what you tell it to do, all the time, every time. It's the closest thing to a no-fault motocross bike the 125 class has ever seen.

Like anything else, of course, the CR125R is not perfect—almost, but not quite. And if there's any aspect of the bike that is even the least bit questionable, it's the power output. The CR isn't slow by class standards, but neither is it exceptionally fast. The 122cc engine is unusual

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make & Model	Wheel Travel, Front/Rear, In.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias, Front/Rear, percent	Steering head angle/Trail, degrees/inches	Transmission, number of speeds
Honda CR125R–'83	10.9/12.3	192	48.6/51.4	27.2/4.1	6
Suzuki RM125–'83	10.7/11.8	200	48.1/51.9	29.5/4.8	6
Kawasaki KX125–'82	11.2/11.4	200	48.0/52.0	28.0/4.8	6
Suzuki RM125–'82	11.2/12.6	197	47.7/52.3	29.5/4.8	6
Honda CR125R–'81	10.6/11.5	213	46.7/53.3	29.5/4.8	6

for a modern 125 in that it makes its best power in the middle and upper-middle rpm ranges rather than at the very top. The power doesn't abruptly fall off at super-high revs, but it does taper off considerably. So if you wind the engine up to maximum rpm it still makes some horsepower, but you can go faster if you shift earlier and use the stronger acceleration that's possible at lower revs in the next-higher gear.

As a result, the higher-revving 125s probably will out-accelerate the CR by a small margin when the traction is excellent and the straights are relatively smooth and long. But any time the track is slick or rough or tight, the controllability of the Honda's power will prove to be a distinct advantage. And overall, while the CR might not roost as much dirt or make as much noise as most other 125s when powering out of a corner, on most courses its tractability will help make up for what the bike lacks in brute power. Pro-class riders might need to perform a little open-port surgery on the cylinder, but just about everyone else will be better off to leave the porting alone and enjoy the tractability.

Besides, any power deficits that aren't offset by the friendliness of the engine probably can be nullified by the CR's handling, which borders on the supernatural. You truly feel invincible on this machine, as though Mr. Roarke himself has granted your fantasy and instantly made you a world-class rider. Once you climb aboard the CR's new, extra-long blue seat, nothing can stop you. The track can change from fast to slow, from bumpy to smooth, from slippery to loamy and back again, but you and the CR breeze through it all as easily as a cruise down Main Street.

A perfect example is the steering. There is, quite frankly, no kind of corner that the CR won't go around quickly, cleanly and precisely. It eagerly snaps around first-gear hairpins almost in its own length, yet it attacks fast sweepers like they were its specialty. It can use just a part of a berm to quickly square off a turn, or it will rim-ride around the outside without any tendency to either climb up out of the berm or slip down off of it. The nifty Bridgestone M33 front tire is responsible for some of this exceptional turning versatility, but the De Coster-signature steering geometry deserves most of the credit.

What's more, none of this steering magic has caused the CR to be the least bit unstable in the rough. It never fails to track arrow-straight, even over the most dreaded of killer whoops and monster bumps. And the suspension smooths out virtually all of the harshness from the track surface, making big bumps feel like little ones and little bumps feel like no bumps at all. The rear end never wants to kick upward or side-to-side, and the fork effectively isolates the hammering of the track from the rider's hands and forearms.

Right out of the box, in fact, the suspension outperforms any we've ever tested on a 125; and with minimal fine-tuning, it becomes better yet. We ultimately settled on the stock weight and level of oil in the fork, with the compression damping adjusted three turns out from maximum. At the rear, we preferred the compression damping set on the full-softest position and the rebound on its second- or third-softest, with the stock spring preloaded to an overall length of 245mm. Ideally, our bigger riders (170 to 190 pounds—heavier, admittedly, than your average 125-class pilot) would have used the optional stiffer shock spring, since the rear end tended to bottom too often with one of them aboard; but they never really *minded* the bottoming, because aside from feeling a gentle "thump" a few times each lap, they reported no adverse effects on the handling whatsoever. It's one more of many reasons why the new CR125R is almost too good to be true.

Indeed, but while the CR performs like a refugee from Fantasy Island, it doesn't feel like Tattoo's personal minibike the way most other 125s do. It weighs a mere 192.5 pounds and is as easy to toss around as a Schwinn, but in actuality it's a full-size motocrosser for full-grown riders, not something scaled-down to grade-schooler dimensions. A six-foot rider isn't at all cramped on the Honda, yet smallish riders aren't intimidated by its size.

Add to that, then, the comfort of the seat, the low level of engine vibration, the two-finger stopping power of the front brake and, of course, the flawless handling, and it's plain to see why the CR, despite its unremarkable acceleration, is such a competitive 125: It is virtually incapable of a mistake. You, of course, will make your fair share of them, but at least the Honda won't worsen matters by making mistakes of its own. And that ease of operation will allow you to ride the CR harder, longer and with more absolute control and confidence than any other production-line bike in the class.

With all of that going for you, you can't help but go faster in the process. And win more often, as well. Because with you or without you, CR125Rs are going to collect a pile of trophies in this coming season. ●

Ride Review

• I've never been able to race a 125 competitively. My six-foot-two body never seemed to fit properly behind the bar, and my 180-pound bulk usually had the suspension and motor screaming for relief. I was resigned to a life of Open- or 250-class racing—until I rode the new CR125R.

I know it's a 125 because it says so on the seat, but that's all that stops me from believing Honda has built a little 250. I finally can fit behind the bar of a 125 without getting knee-cramps. More importantly, Honda has developed a suspension system that can even handle my Open-class-sized body, without sacrificing the ride for the little folk of 125cc racing. In fact, I'm not even sure how I'd go about altering the suspension to make it better for me. I tried, but nothing seemed to work as well as the stock settings.

The only part of the motorcycle I'd want to change would be the power curve. There's plenty of low-end and mid-range power, even for a 180-pounder like me, but when the racing gets furious, the little CR needs stronger top-end pull.

Even without that change, though, the CR125R still is a very competitive machine. But even better, it makes me feel that even I could be competitive in the 125cc class. And any bike that can do that has to be special. —*David Dewhurst*

• I'm not a good sport. Every time a kid on a 125 flies past me and my Open bike in practice, I'm left thinking about putting garlic in his Clearasil the night before the prom. It doesn't bother me that 125s can go faster than 500s on some courses, but it does bother me that *I* can't go that fast when I'm on a 125.

Or at least I can't go that fast on most 125s. The Honda CR125R, however, clearly is different. It's a 125 for grownups. The Honda has none of the twitchy or explosive habits that keep me off most small-bores. In fact, it's one of the easiest-to-race machines—of any size—I've ever ridden. That isn't to say it's powerful, though. Chances are that holeshots are going to be few and far between. But what the CR lacks in top-end muscle is more than compensated for in the way its horsepower is delivered. It has an Open-bike power curve, just moved down a couple of notches on the entire scale. Plus, the CR is stable enough to make you believe you *are* on an Open bike through the straights, and then in the turns, the CR is as agile as any 125 on the track.

And when I race the Honda, the kids in practice don't even bother me any more. What does get me, though, are those old men on Open bikes. They just always seem to be in the way. —*Ron Lawson*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda CR125R — motocross

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company Inc., 100 West Alondra Boulevard, Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $1738

ENGINE

Type ..... liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement ..... one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, two booster transfers, one exhaust
Bore and stroke ..... 55.5mm x 50.7mm
Displacement 122.7cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 8.6:1
Carburetion ..... one 34mm Keihin slide/needle
Air filter ..... washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system ..... primary kick
Ignition ..... internal-rotor magneto CDI
Charging system ..... none

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 3.294:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #520 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 1/4-in. width); 3.923:1 (51/13) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.417	31.231	2.39
II	2.000	25.846	2.89
III	1.556	20.103	3.72
IV	1.300	16.800	4.45
V	1.136	14.685	5.09
VI	1.000	12.923	5.78

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front .. Kayaba air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter, compression damping infinitely variable within 8 turns of adjuster/10.9 in. (278mm)
Rear ..... single Showa shock, 12-position adjustable compression damping, 20-position adjustable rebound damping, 14.5mm spring preload range/12.3 in. (313mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... drum, single-leading shoe
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, straight-pull cable-operated

TIRES

Front ..... 90/80-21 Bridgestone Motocross M33
Rear ..... 130/80-18 Bridgestone Motocross M32

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight ..... 192.5 lbs. (87.3kg)
Weight distribution ..... 48.6% front, 51.4% rear
Wheelbase ..... 56.3 to 57.6 in. (1430 to 1464mm)
Seat height ..... 36.6 in. (930mm)
Handlebar width ..... 32.3 in. (820mm)
Footpeg height ..... 16.3 in. (415mm)
Ground clearance ..... 13.7 in. (348mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle ..... 27.2 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.13 in. (105mm)
Frame ..... tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank ..... plastic, 2.0 gal. (7.5*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation ..... none

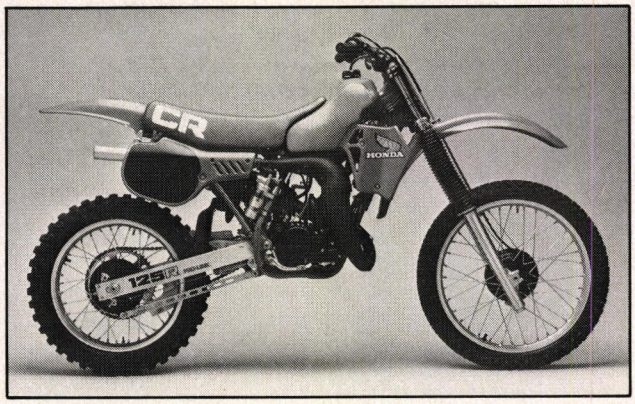
PERFORMANCE

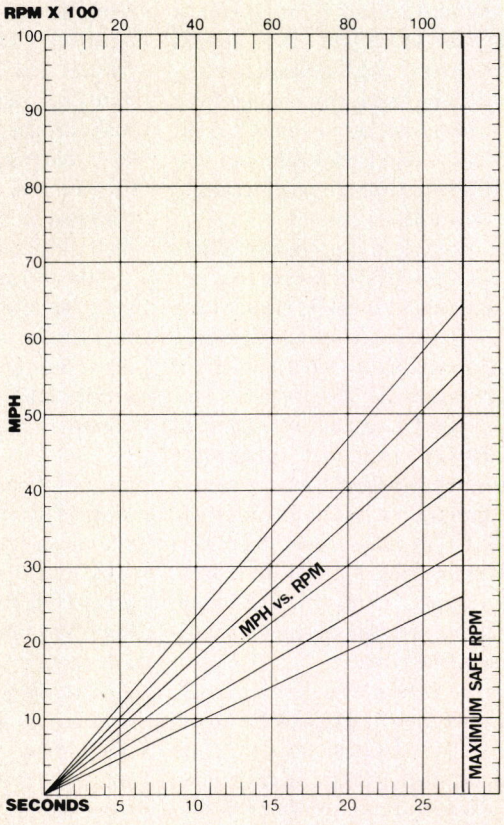
Top speed (observed) ..... 64 mph (106 km/h)

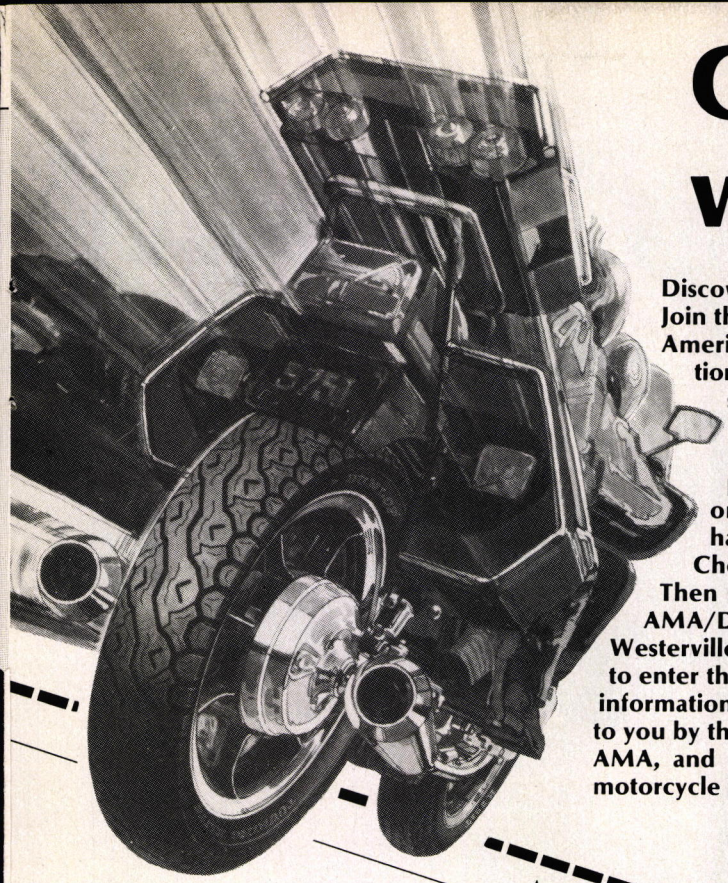
WARRANTY: none

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty







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Mail to: Touring Series, American Motorcyclist Association, P.O. Box 141, Westerville, OH 43081.

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Name _____

Address _____

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Phone ( ) _____

☐ **Yes, I am an AMA member.**

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☐ **No, I am not an AMA member.** **CG**

AMA National Championships

AMA National Poker Run
☐ **Sept. 3-5:** Greentown, Indiana

AMA National Field Meet
☐ **Sept. 3-5:** Greentown, Indiana

AMA Western Timed Road Run
☐ **July 17:** Clackamas, Oregon

AMA Eastern Timed Road Run
☐ **July 31:** Brighton, Michigan

AMA Regional Conventions

Northeast Region
☐ **Aug. 19-21:** Collins, New York

Southeast Region
☐ **July 21-24:** Monteagle, Tennessee

North Central Region
☐ **June 24-26:** Elkhorn, Wisconsin

South Central Region
☐ **July 1-4:** Montgomery City, Missouri

Northwest Region
☐ **Aug. 20, 21:** Vancouver, Washington

AMA District Rallies

☐ **Apr. 16, 17:** Lakeland, Florida
☐ **Apr. 30:** Pontiac, Michigan
☐ **May 27-30:** Hampton, Georgia
☐ **June 11, 12:** Southington, Ohio
☐ **June 11, 12:** Strawtown, Indiana
☐ **June 25, 26:** Miami, Oklahoma
☐ **June 30-July 3:** Louisville, Kentucky
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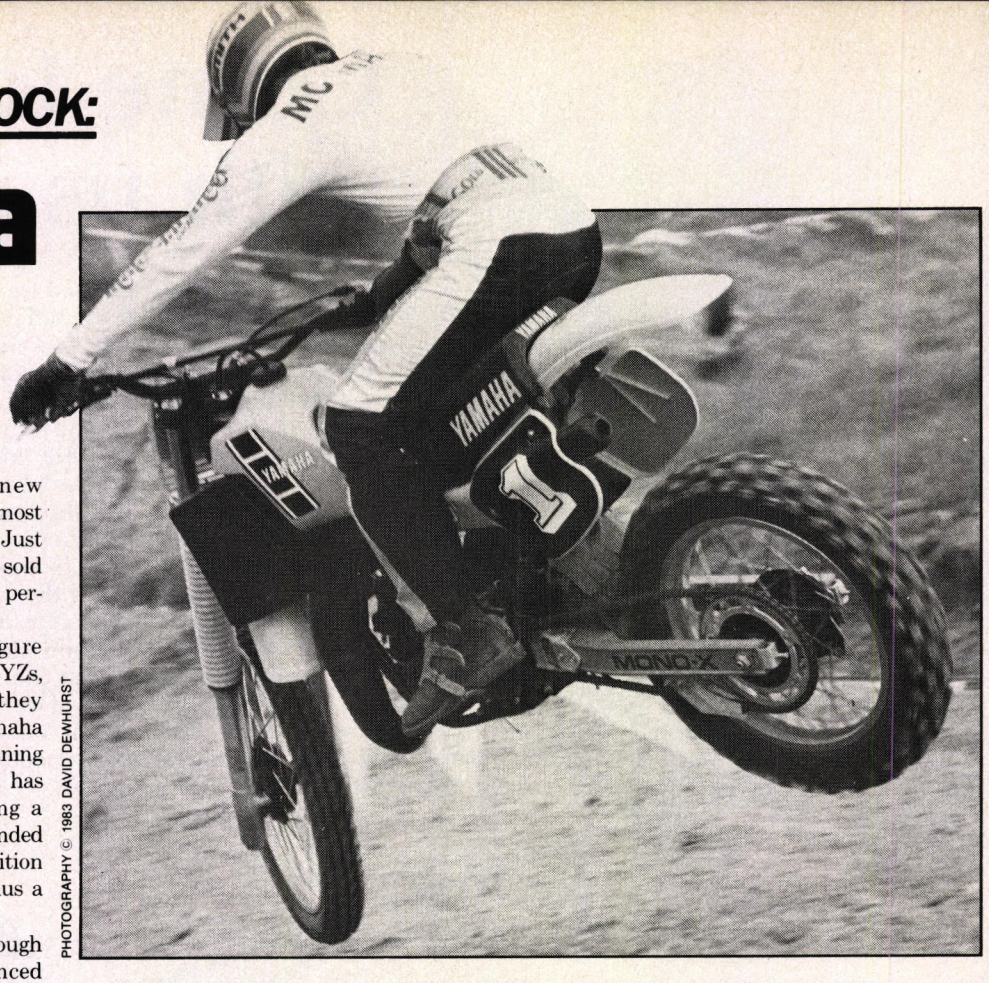
BETTER THAN STOCK:

Yamaha YZ250

One step beyond.



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• As soon as you roll your shiny new motocross bike off the showroom floor, most manufacturers consider their job done. Just like it says on the rear fender, the bike is sold "as is." And if you don't like the way it performs, well, that's your problem.

The people at Yamaha, however, figure that every time you race one of their YZs, you're representing the company, so they want you to do well. Which is why Yamaha will, if you ask, tell you all about the tuning tricks that the factory motocross team has developed. So, because we were racing a YZ250K, we asked. And Yamaha responded by showing us the tricks from Competition Support Wrench Report number 33—plus a few other secrets.

To begin with, a stock YZ is potent enough to be a bit of a handful for inexperienced riders. So most of the changes recommended by Yamaha are aimed toward making the engine's power delivery more manageable. The biggest step in this direction comes from the use of a 1981-to-1983 YZ60 magneto assembly and matching ignition black box. This ignition provides slightly more spark lead, which allows the YZ250K to pick up approximately 500 rpm on the top end. And since a small external rotor replaces the standard internal rotor, there's a slight increase in flywheel inertia that helps smooth the power delivery. Mounting the ignition will require some ingenuity, though, because the wiring harness will have to be lengthened. And Yamaha cautions that the static ignition timing must be set at 1.3mm BTDC—no more or less.

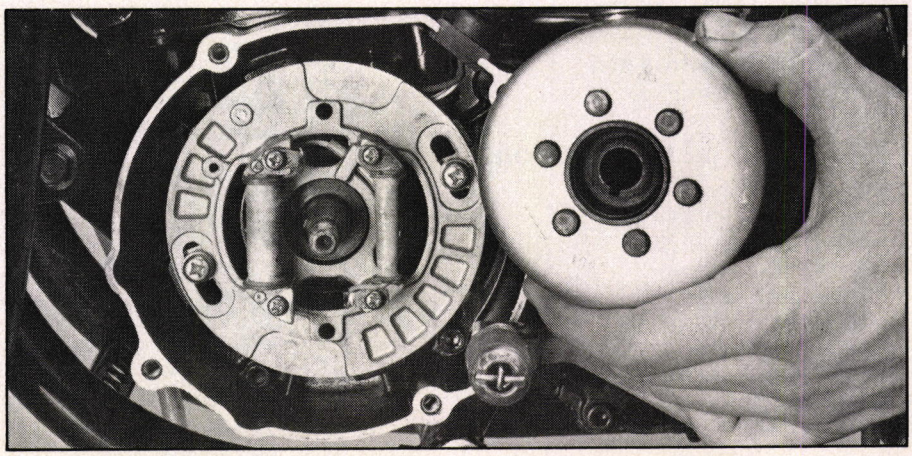
Yamaha also advises port changes on the YZ250K. The exhaust port on our machine was raised 1.5mm, and the power valve was relieved to match the new port height. The bottom of the intake port was lowered 1.5mm, and the head was milled 0.5mm. The squish band in the combustion chamber may also require remachining to maintain a clearance of 0.75mm between the band and the piston.

The stock YZ also has a slight breathing problem, which is cured with a reshaped air-filter element available through YPDI (Yamaha Parts Distributors Incorporated). But because the stock airbox draws air only from under the seat, the top of the new filter can clog with dirt while the bottom remains virtually clean. A quick-and-easy remedy is to cut vents into the front of the box, right behind the shock absorber.

A 50-tooth rear sprocket finishes the recommended modifications and gets the YZ ready for the start line. We didn't notice an incredible horsepower increase, although Yamaha does claim the modifications result in a 1½-horsepower gain throughout the powerband. But the most noticeable difference is that the engine no longer comes on the pipe with a sharp kick. Instead, the power delivery is linear and much smoother. And that helps most in situations where precise throttle control is necessary. Without the harsh power surge of the stock YZ, traction is much easier to find and maintain, and that means more power on the ground, where it counts.

Furthermore, the modified YZ becomes a consistently good holeshot machine. Again, because the power comes on more gradually, you don't have to worry so much about wheelieing, spinning or bogging. But because its flywheel inertia is greater, the modified YZ revs more slowly than the stocker. Some riders, especially those who have graduated from the fan-the-clutch-and-wheelie-out-of-the-turn school of motocross, might prefer the snappy response of the stock YZ. With time, though, even they would probably turn quicker lap times on the modified machine.

There is, of course, a price for this performance edge—YZ60 ignitions don't grow on berms, you know. A complete ignition will set you back $285.95. Porting modifications aren't cheap, either. So the decision is straightforward enough: If all you want is one of the quickest, strongest and lightest 250s on the market, you can just leave your YZ250K stock. But you'll always know it could be just a little better. *—Ron Lawson*



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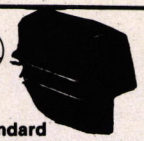

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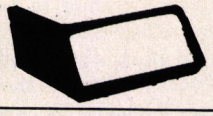

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Totes Motorcycle Stretch Boots

The liquid-latex alternative to webbed feet.

• Often the most obvious solution is the last one tried. In motorcycling, especially, it seems whenever we need riding accessories we automatically turn to the cycling aftermarket as the only possible source. Granted, most often we'll find top-quality apparel designed specifically for riding, but sometimes clothing just as good—or better—has been right under our noses without getting a second glance. A perfect example is the Totes pull-on rainboot.

Totes Inc. is a name almost synonymous with raingear; the company's umbrellas, rainhats and rainboots have, for years, been stashed into commuters' briefcases whenever the skies looked gray. And that "stashed into briefcases" part is important; not only are Totes overboots completely waterproof, they fold up into a package only 4 inches square. Their application to motorcycling was a natural, and if motorcyclists couldn't make the connection, Totes Inc. could.

The company's Model 99 high-top overboot is now offered as the Totes Motorcycle Stretch Boot—and the only change made was to the logo on the packing box. But nothing else needed changing; just as they were, the boots were perfectly suited to the needs of a rider. To start with, the Model 99 is 13 inches high, tall enough to keep your pant cuffs dry, as well as your boots. And like all Totes' boots, the 99s are made by dipping pre-formed boot molds into liquid latex, resulting in a completely seamless, waterproof overboot. A second dip is made for the sole only, adding a finish that is both thicker for durability and textured for traction on slippery pavement.

The boots come in sizes Extra Small through Extra Large and, as the name implies, they stretch over riding boots for a snug fit. There's nothing to zip or tie up, and nothing to flap in the wind. With your pants tucked into the boots and your rainsuit's legs drawn down over them, you can ride through Typhoon Tilly knowing that you won't have to walk around in soggy boots when you've arrived.

Totes Motorcycle Stretch Boots are distributed through several major aftermarket suppliers, and should be readily available at local accessory shops. If you still can't find a pair, go to the nearest Honda dealership; the boots are a Honda-line accessory, with a suggested price of $13. Or you could try searching them out in a department store—and pretend it was you, and not Totes Inc., who realized just how well they work for motorcyclists.

—Joe Kress

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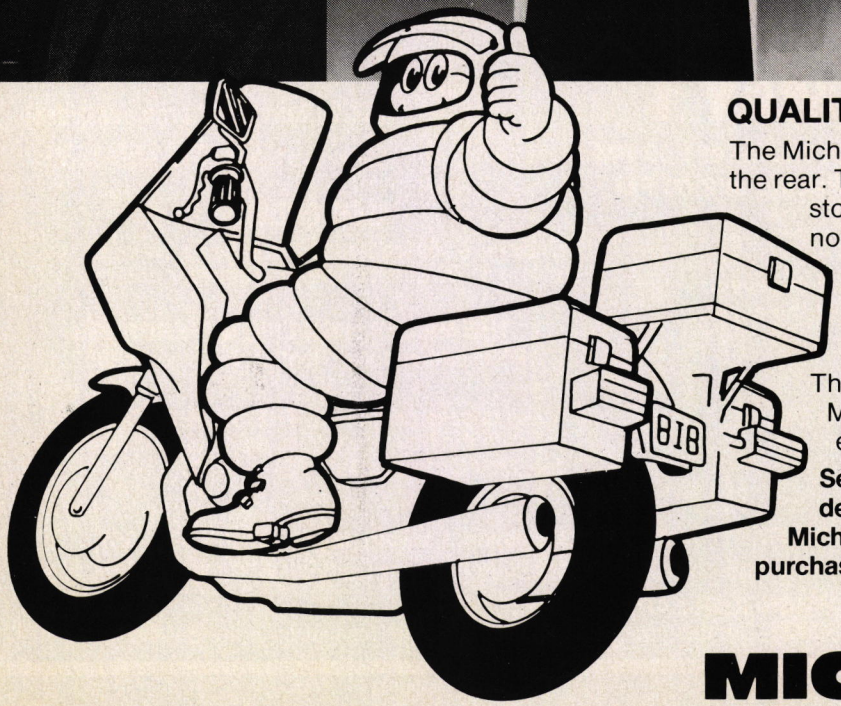

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RIDING IMPRESSION:

Equalean Sidecar

A flexible alternative to the rigid sidecar question.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 RICH COX

Sidecar rigs are motorcycling's mutants. After all, that's what you end up with when you take a motorcycle, a single-track vehicle, and alter its character, its very nature, by adding a third wheel and a chair. Such devices steer more like an automobile than a solo bike, but they lack a four-wheeler's weather protection and creature comforts, as far as the rider is concerned. On the other hand, they're still motorcycles, predominantly, but the addition of the car strips the rider of the kinesthetics associated with leaning while cornering, which is at the very core of the motorcycling experience. *Continued*

At least, that's a solo rider's point of view. A sidecar enthusiast might prefer to think of his rig more as a synthesis than a mutant. After all, a sidecar can almost double a motorcycle's carrying capacity, either in terms of passengers or cargo, and allows *some* of the sensations of riding to remain intact. Still, your average sidecar simply can't deliver the goods when it comes to cornering with lean angles.

The Equalean, though, is not your average sidecar, neither in appearance nor in the way it functions. A swoopy-looking fiberglass body covers the 1-inch square-section mild-steel tube frame, and with the optional locking canopy in place, the Equalean makes most other sidecars look like bathtubs on wheels. But it's the ability to lean *with* the motorcycle through turns that really separates this unit from conventional, rigidly mounted sidecars.

Not that the concept is entirely new, because flexible mounts appeared on sidecars as early as 1903 or 1904, and Freddie Dixon won the first sidecar event at the Isle of Man TT in 1923 with a "leaner" rig; his passenger, Walter Derry, controlled the degree of lean with a lever which raised or lowered the sidecar's wheel. This particular execution of the leaning-sidecar concept, however, is new, and it's the product of Wally Wallick and his son Ghraydon, founders of Equalean Inc. (711 W. 17th St. E-6, Costa Mesa, California 92627).

Where the Equalean differs from rigid- and flexible-mount practice is in its linkage, which allows lean, yet keeps track (distance between sidecar and motorcycle wheels) constant. In front, two parallel arms of 1.125-inch chromoly tubing connect the bike to the sidecar, and pivot in bronze bushings at both ends. These arms attach to the car's frame and to large brackets clamped onto the motorcycle's front downtubes, one at cylinder-head height and the other at sump-level. The rear mount, though, employs an odd-looking ball-and-track arrangement; a vertical track bolts to the car, and in it slides a steel ball, supported by a bracket bolted to a rear frame tube, the right-side passenger peg and the right shock absorber's top mount. This system not only permits the car to lean, but also to move up and down independent of the bike in response to road irregularities. An S&W air-adjustable shock working on a swingarm-like affair provides a comfortable ride over most road surfaces, and an electric air pump run by the motorcycle's battery is included as standard equipment.

Installing the Equalean on our Kawasaki GPz1100 was a full day's work; it's not a task for the novice mechanic, what with the linkage's sensitivity to bolt-torques and to any binding in the system. Plus, the 1100 needed its share of preparation, such as 25-30 psi of air in the front fork (the Wallicks also recommend stiffer fork springs and/or preload spacers), and finding new homes for the oil cooler and horns. The front fender had to be mounted closer to the front tire, too; otherwise the upper parallel arm would hit the fender under hard braking. Unfortunately, there was no easy way to replace the narrow, multi-piece handlebars; a wider bar's extra leverage would be sorely missed.

The Equalean is most at home in long, sweeping corners, where you can just set the lean angle and power on through.

We chose the GPz1100 partly because it would have more than enough power to pull the Deluxe-model sidecar ($2194, with folding canopy and adjustable footrest; Imron paint, color-matched to the 1100's paint scheme, is $250 extra), and partly to see if the Equalean really lent itself to the "backroad burning" the ad copy claims.

To get to those backroads, however, you usually have to traverse city streets and/or highways, and in the close confines of urban traffic, the Equalean feels clumsy and truckish. Not that a rigid rig is any more nimble; the Equalean just requires forceful, decisive inputs at the handlebar. Otherwise, the rig induces a steering wobble through low-speed corners, and ignores

half-hearted corrections. But the thing responds a bit too much like a solo bike—one weighing nearly half a ton—when you're stopping for a traffic signal. It *will* topple over if the rider fails to put a foot down.

Once out on the open highway, the Equalean displays another steering aberration. When the rig is upright and traveling in a straight line, the rider can initiate a dive to the left by getting on the gas, hard. And, because the sidecar's linkage does allow solo-bike response, correction involves countersteering to the left, which makes the whole rig go right. Under braking, the reverse takes place, with right countersteer used to check the outfit's movement to the right. That's normal for a solo bike, but it's the opposite of how a rigid-mount sidecar steers under power or braking.

You can make good use of all that information when you get to the backroads, because hustling through corners magnifies every trait. Subtleties of steering are lost on the Equalean, and cautious attempts to arc gracefully through corners are met with a contemptuous wobble. Nor does it care for *any* forward weight-shift when leaned over; if the rider downshifts, brakes or closes the throttle in mid-turn, the weight transfer causes the car's nose to bob up and down, which translates into a steering wobble, which makes the car bob, and so on. The same thing occurs if the turn is bumpy or if the passenger doesn't make a conscious effort to hold still. Pumping the car's shock up to approximately 115 psi helps control the bobbing, but also makes for an unpleasantly stiff ride for the passenger.

So, proper technique means shifting and braking *before* entering the corner; then, at the apex, pitching the outfit into the turn, with the throttle on. An intrepid passenger won't mind that kind of cut-and-thrust activity, though, even when it's accompanied by the sound of the GPz's chassis parts dragging in left-hand corners.

Right-handers present their own special problem to throttle-on cornering, because of the Equalean's penchant for steering left under power. As a result, the rig wants to climb out of the turn, and it takes a mighty effort at the handlebar to force the thing down and keep it there. Applying rear

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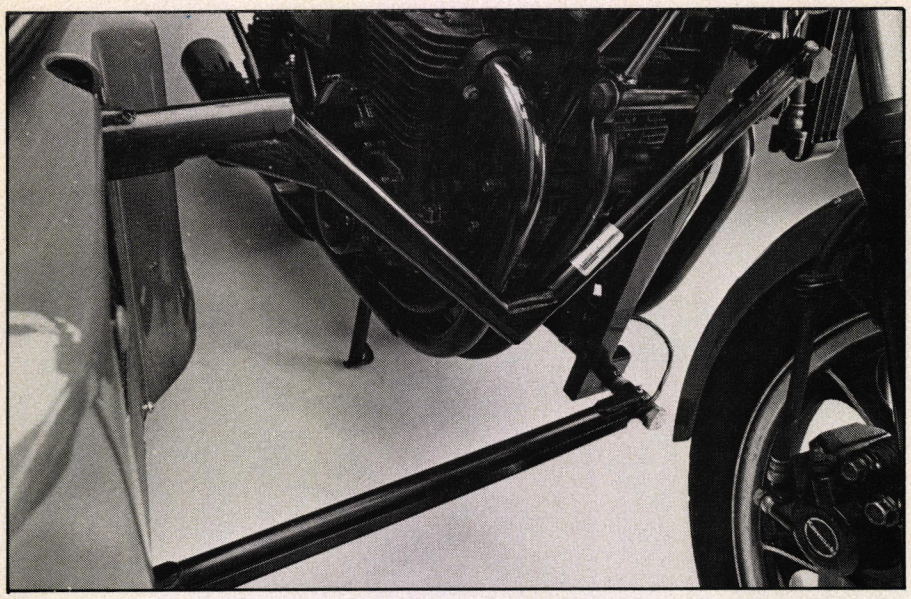

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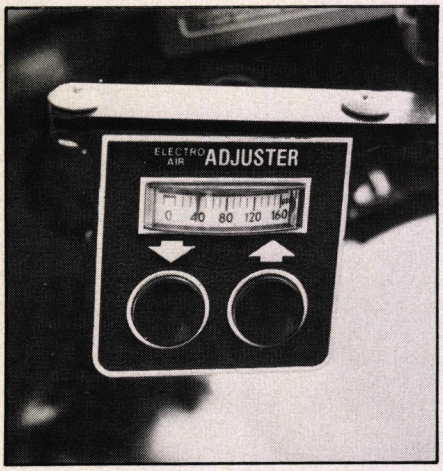
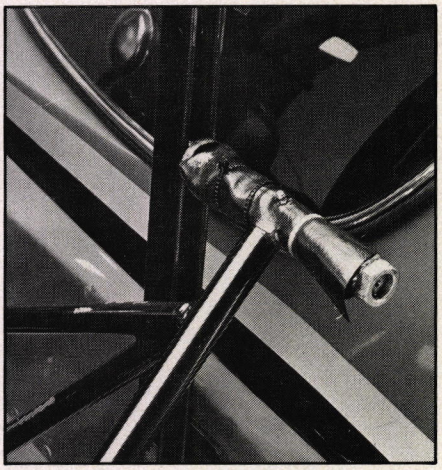
Chromoly parallel arms make up the other half of the leaning-linkage system

But they're sensitive to any binding or over-tightening of fasteners.



Gauge/adjuster for sidecar's S&W shock

For while-you-ride pressure changes.



Sliding-ball-and-track rear mount

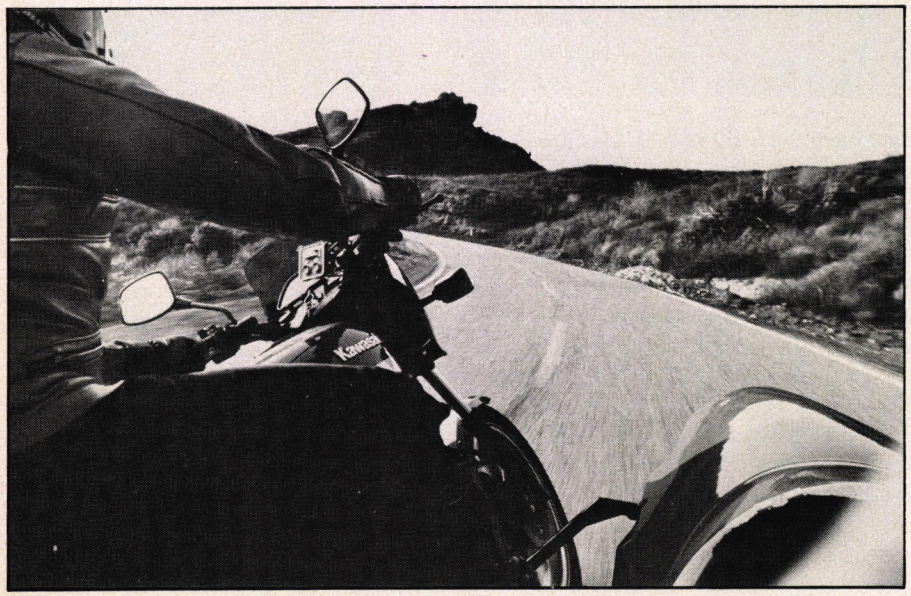
The atypical sidecar connection.

brake helps drop the Equalean into starboard turns, but only up to a point. Then the linkage seems to bind, and there's no more lean-angle to be had. Consequently, exiting right-hand turns—especially decreasing-radius ones—can use up more room than you intended.

This shouldn't suggest, however, that these things are happening at solo-GPz1100 speeds. No, the Equalean works best at more moderate speeds, in smooth, constant- or increasing-radius corners where you can just set the lean angle and power on through. Oh, sure, you can herd the rig around at a more respectable pace, but you'll need arms like Popeye to do it, particularly in the tight, twisty stuff.

But that's the rider's problem. To a passenger, matters of comfort take on greater importance, and the Equalean's carpeted interior won't make him feel slighted. Neither will the black vinyl sling seat, as long as it's in the roomy, upright position, suspended by two large, threaded plastic knobs and two pegs. Lying down, though, with the seat supported by four other pegs on the sidecar's frame, things get slightly cramped. Changing positions is only a two-minute affair, and the canopy won't close if a passenger is sitting upright.

Still, the Equalean's main attraction is how it preserves a solobike's feel. And it's all right if that doesn't make many converts among solo riders, because sidecars—this one included—aren't supposed to be everyman's machine. But to the person who needs a sidecar's extra carrying capacity and doesn't care to swap lean angles for slip angles, the Equalean will seem just about perfect. Besides, right now no one else offers anything even *close*. ●



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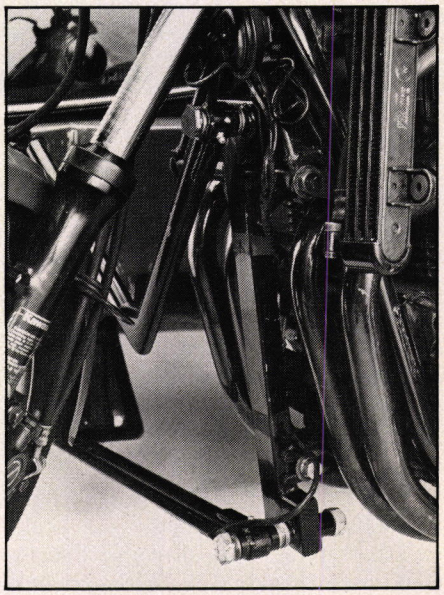
No other sidecar lets a passenger experience the sensation of leaning through corners

Or allows the rider to experience the sensation of dragging chassis parts.



Equalean mounts with massive members

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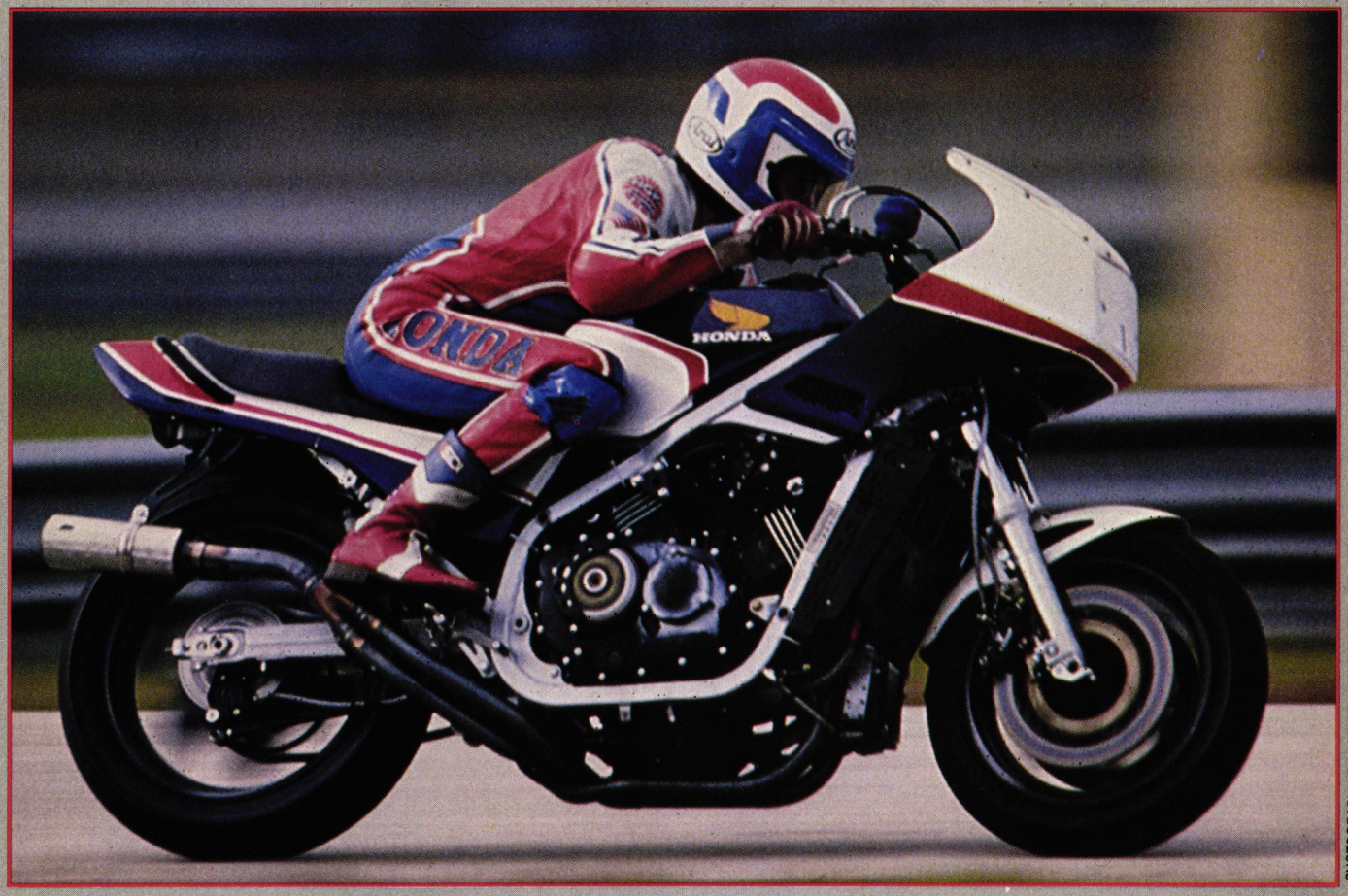
Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI



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Seven, Come Eleven!

Honda covers its bets in Superbike racing.

• Udo Gietl, Honda's roadrace team manager, considered the question for a moment: How much horsepower does the new Interceptor Superbike produce? He paused, then suggested it wouldn't be wise to release such information. "It might help Kawasaki," he said. "It'd give them something to shoot for."

Gietl's reply might seem overly cautious, but Superbike racing will venture into a new frontier for 1983, and no one wants to give the other teams an advantage. The new formula limits engine displacement to 1000cc for twins and 750cc for multis. Minimum weight for each is 320 and 390 pounds, respectively.

And Honda is covering its bets by sending an army of Interceptors to the Superbike wars. Safety-in-numbers seems to be the battle plan, because first-stringers Mike Baldwin and Steve Wise will be accompanied by five support-team bikes, piloted by F2 champ Sam MacDonald, newcomer "Flying" Fred Merkel and veterans Dave Aldana, John Bettencourt and Roberto Pietri.

All seven riders will be on new Interceptors, which Gietl said had been designed "with racing in mind." The squadron of support riders will get bikes, spare parts and technological assistance, but they'll have to prepare the bikes and find their own sponsors.

Judging by pre-season testing, the Interceptor appears ready. Following test sessions at Daytona and Laguna Seca, Freddie Spencer (who will ride it at those tracks only) was "ecstatic" about how well it performed. Although Honda didn't disclose any lap times from the Daytona testing, many insiders agree that factory-backed 750s will circulate the 3.8-mile track—considered a benchmark track for horsepower—in less than two minutes and 10 seconds. Some even forecast 2:07s, which Gietl himself candidly hinted was certainly possible with this bike. Com-

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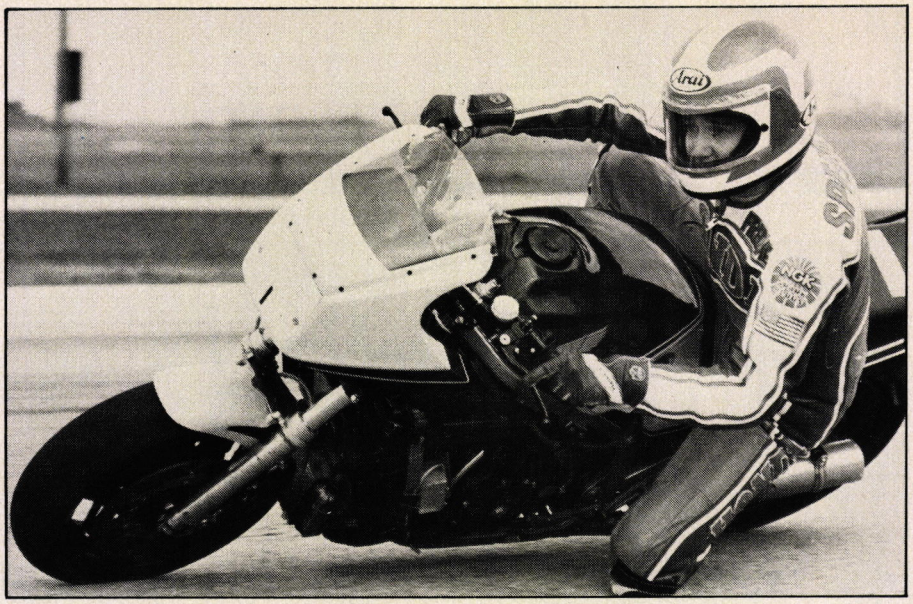


Freddie Spencer testing the new 750cc Honda Interceptor at Daytona Speedway

Fast Freddie was quick to point out that it's the best he's ridden, too.

pare that to Honda's 1024cc Superbike of last year, which turned 2:05s.

A water-cooled (AMA rules restrict liquid-cooled Superbike engines to *water* coolants), 90-degree vee-four engine, similar to Honda's Sabre, powers the Interceptor. But, unlike the Sabre, the cylinders have been rotated rearward to accommodate the Interceptor's rectangular-section tube frame. The engine actually sits higher this way, but rigidity and better weight distribution for roadracing were the main goals.

Although no horsepower figures were given (and probably won't be during the initial year of the new formula), Gietl said the engine's redline was "around 13,000 rpm." Other features include a dry clutch, a five-speed gearbox, four Keihin constant-vacuum carburetors and crossover exhausts.

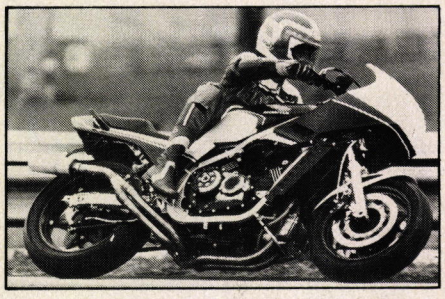
But since Honda intends to market an engine-performance kit for Interceptors, the engine's specs won't be a secret for long. And with the kits will come privateer Interceptors at AMA nationals, which is exactly what Honda wants. As Gietl explained, "Honda is in a position to improve racing in this country. America needs the support and interest of the manufacturers in roadracing."

With that, Gietl threw out another vital tidbit of information for potential Interceptor racers: Both Michelin and Goodyear tires work well on Honda's team bikes. Consequently, Gietl speculated, non-works teams can simply mount either of those brands to their Interceptor's wheels, and go racing. And since AMA rules limit wheel width to 4 inches, everyone should be on equal footing as far as tires are concerned.

Despite the open-door policy, Gietl thinks there still will be critics, people who will say Honda's roadracing wins come from lavish spending of cubic dollars. "A big company such as Honda often gets accused of out-budgeting everyone," he said.

Make no mistake, though; Honda *is* out to beat—even crush—the opposition. But according to Gietl, Honda will stand by its Interceptor-mounted allies. "Yamaha carried American roadracing in the Seventies with its TZ750; Kawasaki was instrumental last year with its Replica, too," he said. "Now, it's Honda's turn to contribute."

—Dain Gingerelli



New Superbike being primed for action

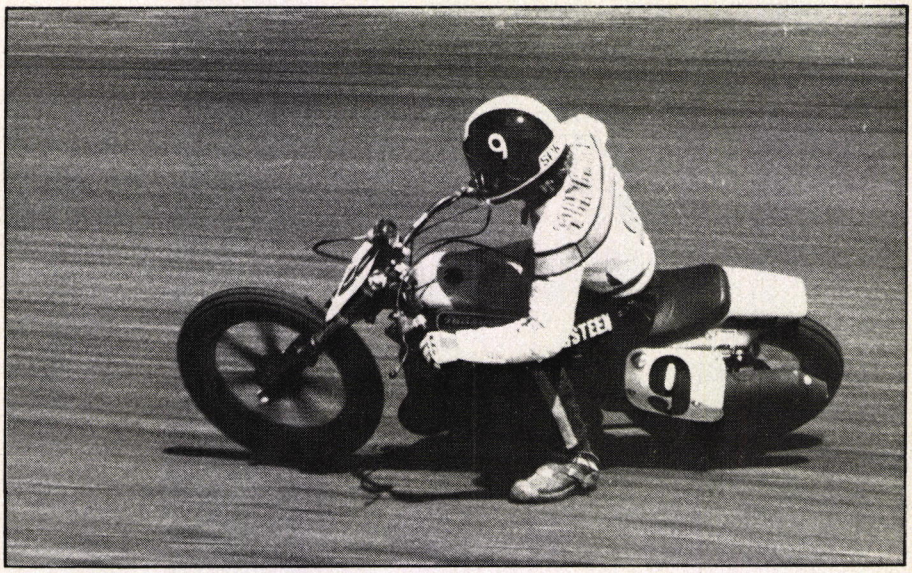
Underside shows crossover exhaust.

Bullet-nose Honda Interceptor Superbike

With Spencer aboard, it'll be lethal.

The Steel Shoe

A giant step forward for oval racing.



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Springsteen on the slide at San Jose

And thanking a guy named Jones.

• The flattracker's steel shoe is one of those seemingly insignificant things about racing that's easily taken for granted. When, for instance, Jay Springsteen pitches his XR750 into a turn and plants his foot for a 100-mph slide, he's probably *not* saying a silent thank-you for that slab of metal strapped to his left boot. But that shoe is important for winning, no less important than horsepower and good handling. And it's been an integral part of oval dirt-racing for a long time, ever since Maldwyn Jones used one first in 1910.

Jones, like the other racers of his time, didn't broadslide his bicycle-tire-shod racer around the dusty turns on the oval tracks. Instead, the accepted technique then was simply to ride through, following the arc of the turn. But Jones discovered that by dragging his left foot while leaning for a corner, he could balance the motorcycle better, and go faster. "I found later that in the turns," said Jones, now 91, "use of my left foot was quite a help in staying on top of the bike."

Even though Jones still wasn't sliding his machine, instead just holding his leg in readiness for the "big slide," as he called it, his style was using up boots left and right—more left than right, actually. And even factory-sponsored riders in 1910 had to keep within a budget. So to get more miles out of his boots, Jones and a blacksmith friend fashioned what was to be motorcycle racing's first skidshoe. Made of 1/8-inch steel, the shoe was crude but effective. "I don't remember how we attached it, with rivets or what, but it helped," said Jones. And so, by trying to shave costs on his

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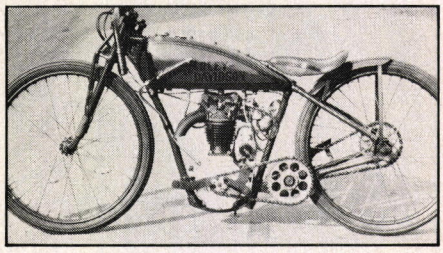
A racer falls during a slide

Another sole lost to the turn.

racing boots, Jones, with the aid of his steel shoe, began shaving seconds off his lap times.

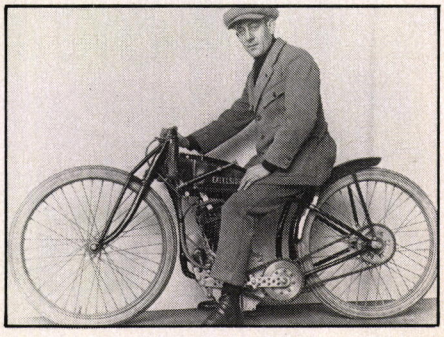
But few other racers adopted his footwear fashion, and it wasn't until 1932 that skid-shoes became a necessity. That was the year Sprouts Elder returned from England and brought with him the technique of broad-sliding through turns, a cornering style first perfected by English speedway racers. That riding style changed American flattrack racing forever, and almost immediately, Yankee racers began fashioning their own ferrous



COURTESY HARLEY-DAVIDSON

Early-vintage Harley flattracker

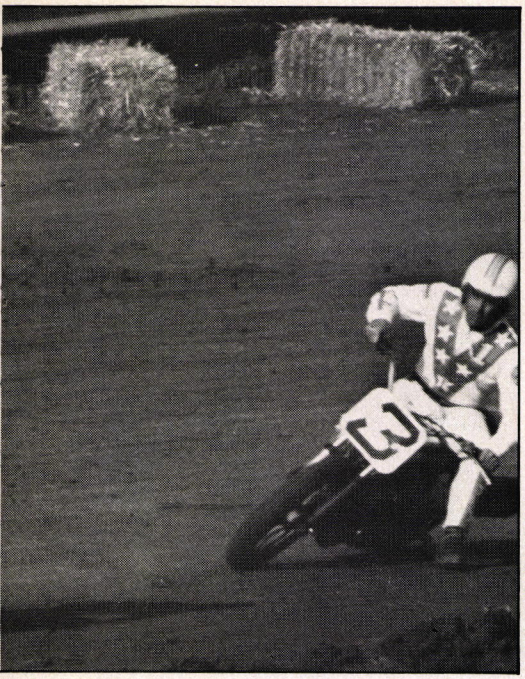
Bicycle tires and car-bumper shoes.



COURTESY MALDWYN JONES

Maldwyn Jones in the early years

Soft-shoe pose for the camera.

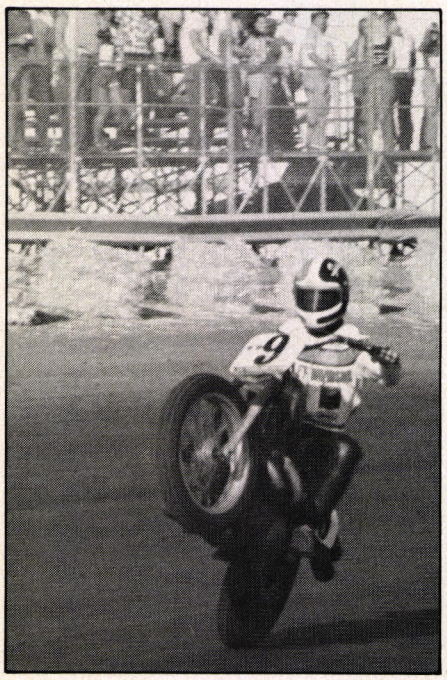


© 1983 DAIN GINGERELLI

footgear to stay competitive. At the time, a quick fix was to cut an automobile bumper to length, and just strap it to the bottom of the boot. The bumper's slight curve was ideal for preventing the shoe from hanging up on rough surfaces; more than that, it was inexpensive and easy to adapt.

And what does Maldwyn Jones think about the impact his boot-saving brainstorm has had on today's racing? "That sliding business carried too far," he said, "but the people in the stands like it, I guess." Not to mention the racers on the oval tracks, each of whom should thank Jones every time they successfully broadslide through a turn.

—Jerry Smith



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Jay Springsteen giving thanks

But no need for steel shoe here.

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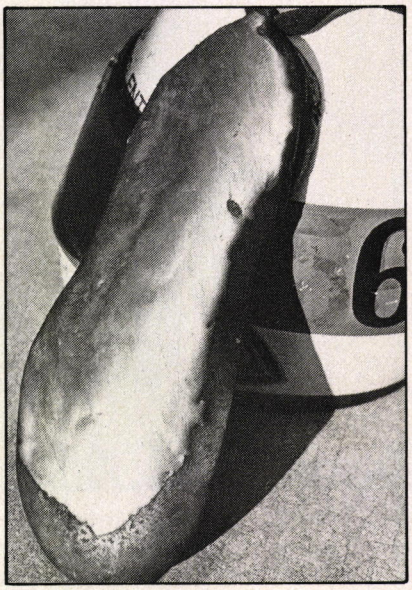
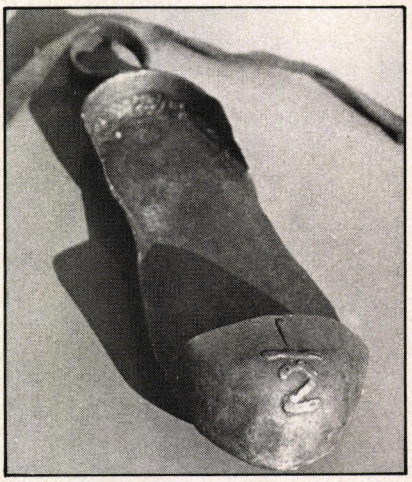


Underside of Maely shoe

Heart and sole of a flattrack slide.



Maely half-mile steel shoe

Designer wear for flattrack racers.

• Steel shoes have changed since Maldwyn Jones' day. Car bumpers are out, handcrafted shoes are in. And the man responsible for practically every steel shoe worn at a Camel Pro series race is Ken Maely, a blacksmith, among numerous other talents, from Corona, California.

Maely tailors every steel shoe to fit the individual rider who wears it. Even though he makes them in four basic styles—speedway, shorttrack, mile and half-mile—no two Maely shoes are alike.

The custom fit begins with a strip of steel that's cut from material used for making bandsaw blades. The .060-inch-

thick metal is annealed, then custom-cut to fit the rider's left boot. A mild-steel toe cap and heel piece are added; then, using a delicate touch with an acetylene torch, a special, very expensive hardface surface is flowed onto the sole of the shoe. It is that incredibly hard finish that allows the shoe to glide easily over the track surface and be almost impervious to wear. The shoe is then stress-relieved, a nylon or leather strap is inserted to hold it to the rider's boot, and it's off to the races.

Maely claims each of his four sole-styles is suited to a particular racing purpose, and the curvature of the sole determines the shoe's application. For instance, the shorttrack shoe has a rounded bottom with an upward-curving toe, since it spends a majority of its track time "planing," a term Maely uses to describe steel-shoe contact with the track surface. The half-mile and mile shoes have flatter bottoms, while the speedway shoe is flattest of all.

A final footnote about Maely's shoes is that every AMA Grand National champion since 1952 has worn one. And with so many racers clomping around the infields on Maely shoes, that's not likely to change for this season, either. —*Jerry Smith*

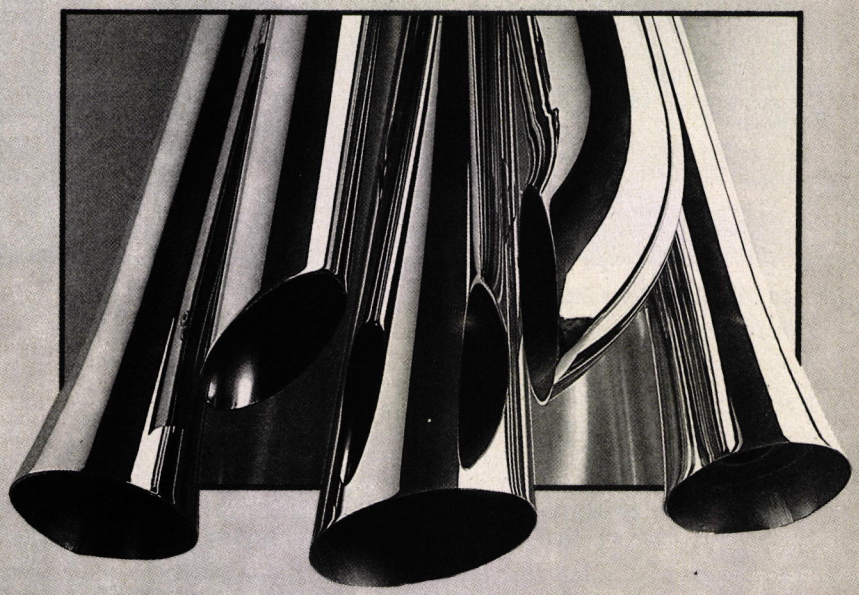
PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 JERRY SMITH

Blacksmith Maely at work

Putting his best shoe forward.

Continued

JARDINE MUFFLERS.
Superbike Performance ...Minibike Price



Jardine Mufflers are precision engineered to be a perfect replacement for your old rusted-out, restrictive OEM mufflers—but with three very exciting differences. First, Styling. Jardine Mufflers are available in several styles to complement your machine and your own personal taste. Second, Performance. Jardine Mufflers will add a modest amount of horsepower and torque, as well as a pleasingly mellow exhaust note. Third, Price. Jardine Mufflers cost only a fraction of factory mufflers. And, quite frankly, we can't imagine why you'd want to replace those boring, rusted-out mufflers with anything but Jardine Mufflers—even if ours did cost more. But at our price, it's like a license to steal. Steal some today.

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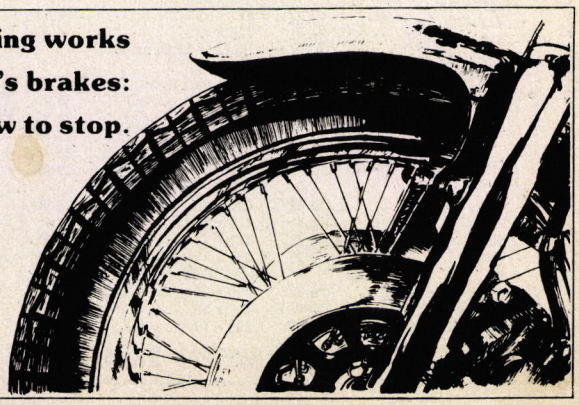

AMA

American Motorcyclist Association,
P.O. Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081

Pit Bits

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Magoo over Chandler's Chasm

Double-jumping: Both feet off the pegs.

Post-race wash-down

Sipping Europe's finest champagne.

• Italian Connection: These days, no motocross berm is safe from Danny Chandler. This time Magoo struck in Italy, winning the Genoa indoor race, where the racers competed in two separate heats on 125cc and 250cc bikes. Former 250-class World Champion Georges Jobe won the 250 heat, with Chandler on his heels for the entire race. Magoo won the 125 race, while Jobe finished third, giving the American the overall win.

• Chandler Chasm: Not only did Danny Chandler win the Genoa event, he introduced the European indoor crowd to the technique of double-jumping, as well. Soon most of the Euro-riders followed his lead, but no one could take the name of the jump away from our boy; his double-

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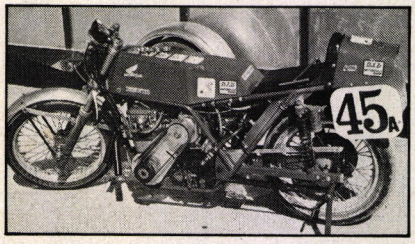
vaulting play area was called, fittingly enough, Chandler's Chasm.

• Quick draw: Just like gunfighters of the Old West, motorcycle dragracers survive by the sharpness of their reflexes. In the Top Fuel showdown at the AMA-DRAGBIKE National Finals in Gainesville, Florida, Bo O'Brochta outdrew Elmer Trett by a mere 0.001 second. The Kawasaki rider's 0.499-second reaction time helped him post an elasped time of 7.858 seconds, while Trett, with a measured reaction time 0.001-second slower, was good for a 7.875. By losing the final round, Trett also lost the Top Fuel title to Steve Suter, who, ironically, was gunned down by O'Brochta earlier in the eliminations.

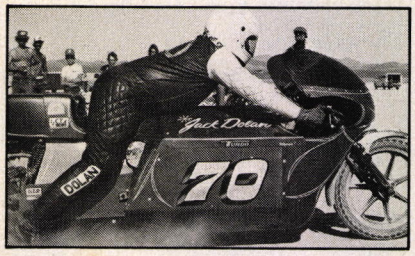
• And Kawasaki makes three: For the record, of the nine AMA-DRAGBIKE titles, Kawasaki-powered bikes won three. Honda and Suzuki machines accounted for two each, while Harley-Davidson and Triumph took one apiece.

• Honda Racing Corp.: In an effort to group all of its racing activities under one roof, Honda Motor Co. has formed the Honda Racing Corp. HRC will combine the Honda Racing Service Center Corp. and the N.R. Group, and will be responsible for all of Honda's motorcycle racing-related activities, including research and development, as well as sales, repair and tuning of racebikes.



Non-streamlined Honda lakester

New rules for stripped bikes.



Streamliner accelerates at El Mirage

Rolling thunder into the wind.

• You've come a long way, baby: The Southern California Timing Association, sanctioning body for the El Mirage Dry Lake Speed Trials, recently segregated its motorcycle classes into two groups: streamlined and non-streamlined. Existing engine and frame rules continue, but

Continued

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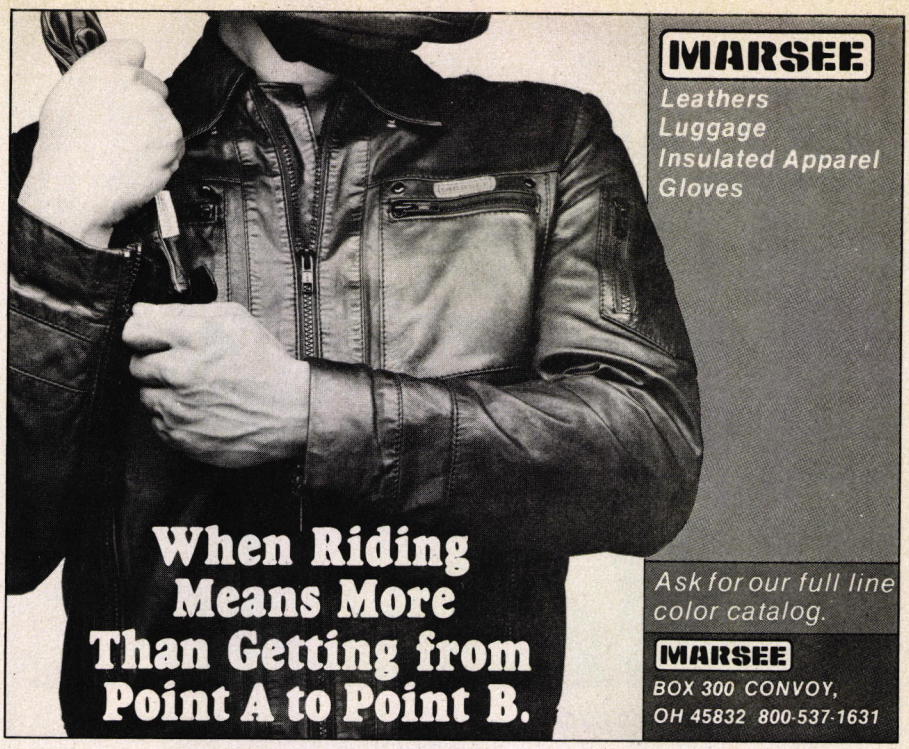

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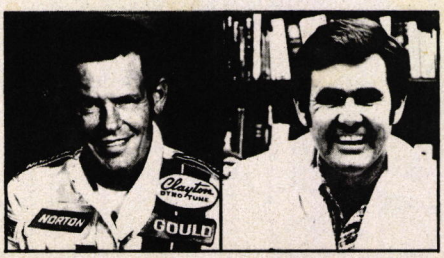

Bobby and Al Unser, race car drivers and motorcyclists. *"On the race track, we're both in total control. We approach off-road riding the same way. Reckless riding is stupid. And not very impressive to the hikers and campers we meet."*

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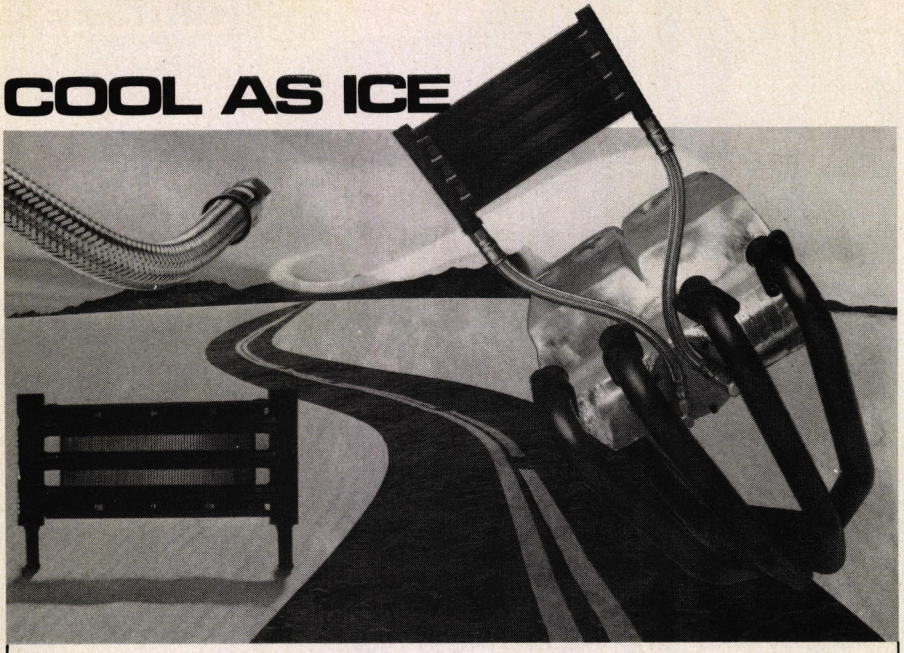
COOL AS ICE



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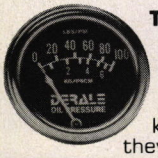

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by identifying the aerodynamics, the dry lake trials should become more attractive to street-oriented riders, who in the past had to compete against streamlined bikes for records. Entry fee for all bikes (non-club members) remains $25.

• Getting the Point across: This year, for the first time ever, the AMA will name a Grand National Hare Scrambles Champion. Hi-Point Racing will sponsor the nine-race series, titled the AMA/Hi-Point National Hare Scrambles Series.

• Dichotomous motocross: To supplement the Wrangler Super Series, which ends in August, the AMA has initiated not one, but two fall motocross series. According to the proposed AMA schedule, there will be both an eastern- and a western-region series, with the eastern racing beginning immediately after the Wrangler Super Series. The western program begins as soon as the eastern events are over. These two new series are separate, and appear to be the AMA's final word that the Trans-USA is dead but not forgotten.

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Close quarters of roadracing

These riders rated X.

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Pocketbike racers single-file in a turn

These riders rated PG.

• This race is rated X: Violence is a way of life for motorcycle racers. At least, it is according to Dr. William Beausey, executive director of the Academy for the Psychology of Sports. In a copyrighted story from

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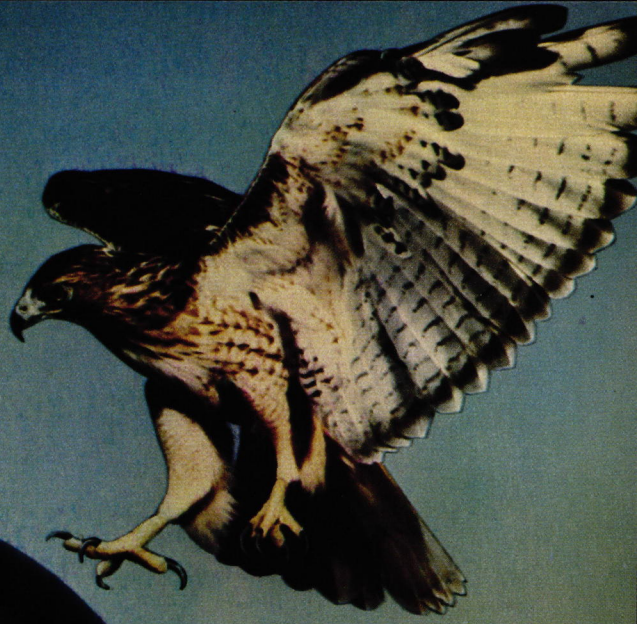

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the *Los Angeles Times* (written by Harry Atkins), Beausey suggested that all sports—from billiards to boxing—be rated according to his Sports Violence Index (SVI). Such a rating, he claims, would help determine whether a particular sport is too violent for people with physical disorders or for certain age groups. Starting at the bottom of Beausey's list, billiards had an SVI of 16, prescribed to be an acceptable rating by the good doctor. Golf was next with an SVI of 20, while the top five were, in ascending order, boxing (54), football (56), ice hockey (64), auto racing (66) and motorcycle racing (68).

• Super cross-up: If you thought the rhubarb between the AMA and the Big Three was confusing last fall, consider Supercross racing's new format. To show the spectators more racing at each event, and to allow more chances for riders to qualify for the main, the AMA has restructured Supercross as follows: 60 riders will make the program, with groups of 15 funneled into four transfer heats. The top eight from each heat continue to one of two semis, while the remaining riders get another chance in the quarter-finals. The first two finishers in each of two quarter-finals also transfer to the semis, where the top eight from each make the main. Riders behind eighth place in the semis go to the Last Chance Qualifier, where the winner and runner-up continue to the main. Then, *finally*, 18 riders line up for the 20-lap main. Anyone for just drawing straws?

Supercross racers bump and nudge

The first step for making the Main.

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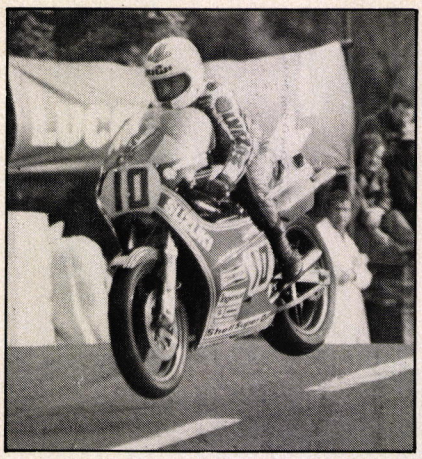

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DON JAMES

Mick Grant airborne at Ballaugh Bridge

One way to clear the 110-mph average.

• Mountain time zone: The ACU, organizing body of the Isle of Man TT races, recently released its list of top island racers. According to the ACU timekeepers, 37 men have lapped the 37.5-mile mountain course at more than 110 mph. Heading the list is Joey Dunlop, who piloted his 1123cc Honda around at 115.40 mph. No. 37 is Steve Henshaw, who stopped the watch at an even 110. The only

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 PAUL BUCKLEY

American on the ACU list is Pat Hennen, who in 1978 lapped the island at 113.83 mph, a record at the time.

• Quote Department: When asked about Budweiser Beer paying $18,500 in prize money for every AMA Pro/Am Superbike and endurance race last year, a company spokesman replied, "Well, it's only money." —*Dain Gingerelli*

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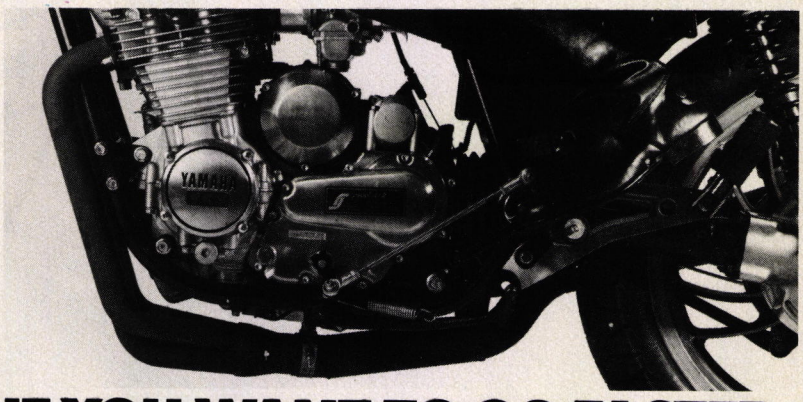

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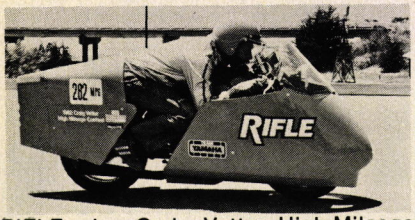

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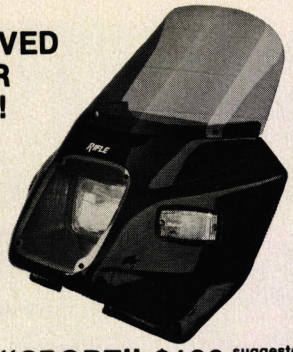

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Winners & Losers

Scott Pearson

Class C racer, Class A scrapper.

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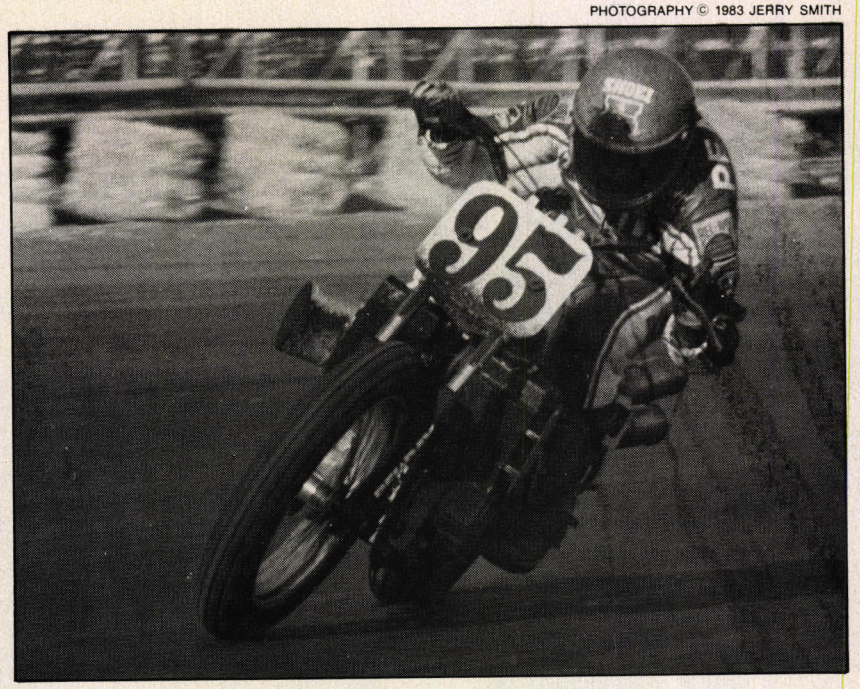

Scott Pearson powering his way to fourth place at San Jose

But still down on horsepower to the Harley-Davidsons.

• It was a long time coming, but finally, on June 5, 1982, a Honda NS750 won its first half-mile national: Louisville. That was the first AMA flattrack national win—the first real *results*—Honda had to show for its CX500-based efforts. But, at the year's end, Scott Pearson, the man who gave Honda its landmark victory, got his walking papers, not a contract renewal.

Which is doubly unfortunate, because in Pearson, Honda had a rider willing to try it all, from shorttracking to roadracing, a rider who could blossom into a well-rounded racer in the tradition of Kenny Roberts, Eddie Lawson and Gary Scott. And with Honda, Pearson could have exploited his talents, as he did by getting a ride on an RCB1000 F1 Honda at Loudon. Not that Pearson was a complete stranger to pavement-racing; as a novice in 1977, he won a handful of trophies and money on a Yamaha TZ250. But a roadracing program is expensive, and as an AMA Expert he turned his concentration to racing on dirt tracks only.

Just the same, when contract time rolled around for 1983, there was no paper for him to sign. Honda's flattrack team coordinator Gene Romero said that the in-

Team Honda's Scott Pearson

The Honda patches are gone.

Continued

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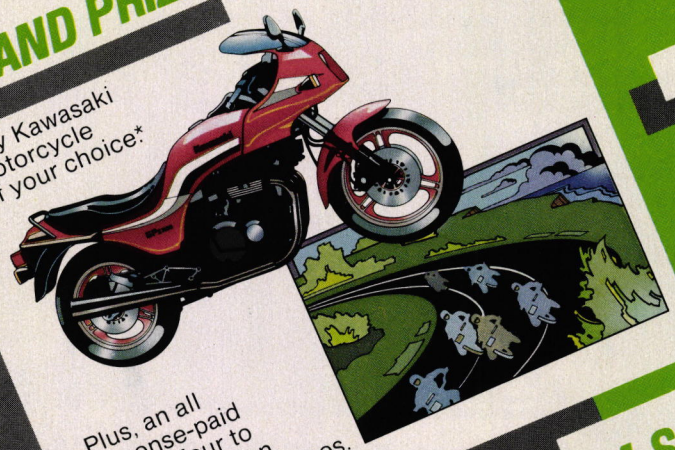

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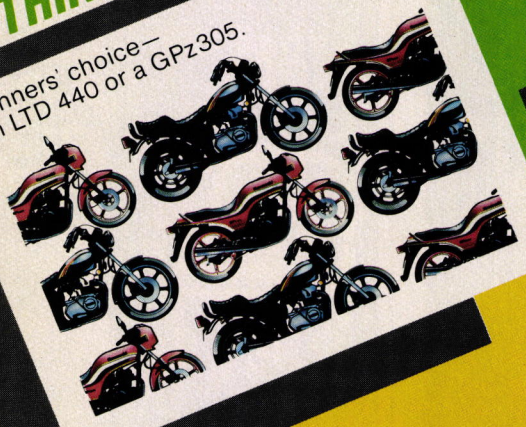

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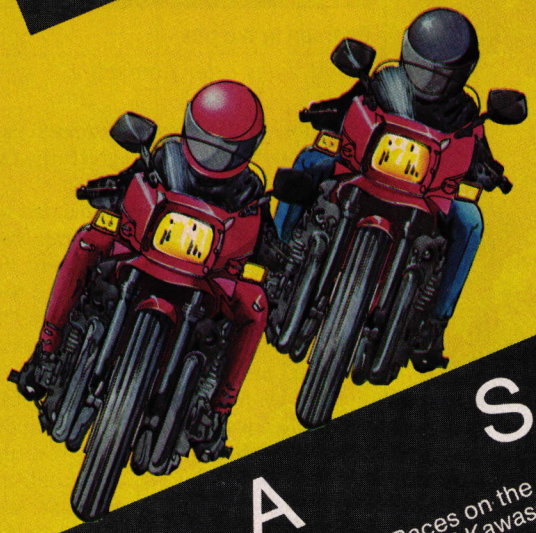

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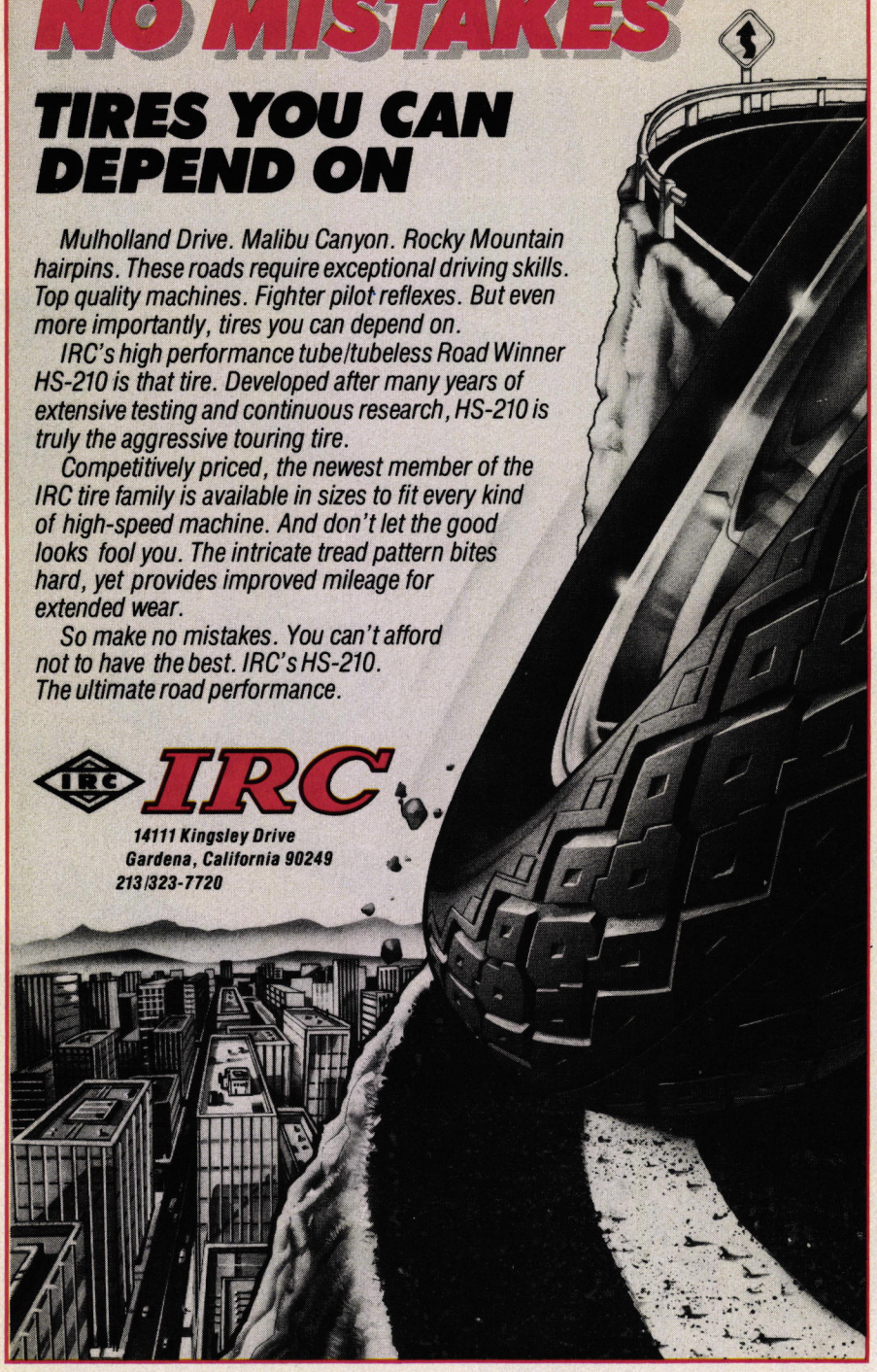

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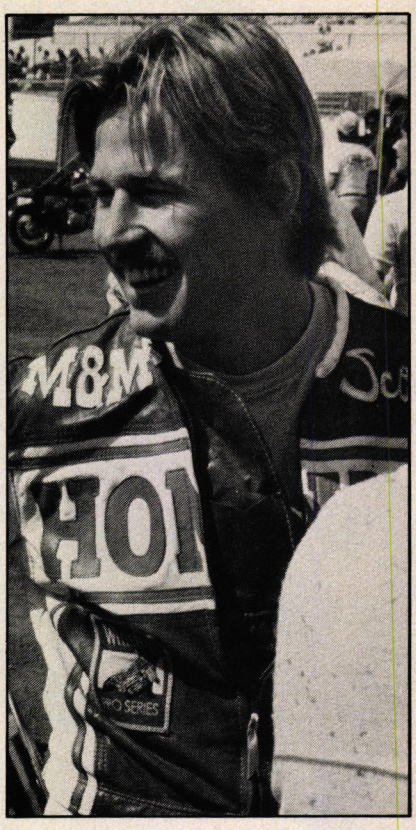


Pearson in the pits

Good times after Louisville.

structions for Pearson's dismissal came from in-house, adding regretfully, "and Honda's a pretty big house."

The reason, Pearson was told, lay with his poor finish in the 1982 overall standings. But he contends equipment deficiencies—not his riding ability—led to his 19th place in the Winston Pro Series. "The milers weren't competitive until the end of the year," he said. And according to other sources, his fourth-place-finishing NS750 at San Jose was still down on horsepower compared to a front-line Harley-Davidson XR750. As for the NS750 in half-mile trim, he said, "For someplace like Ascot, the powerband's too narrow; they get the power to the ground, but they're underpowered coming out of the corners."

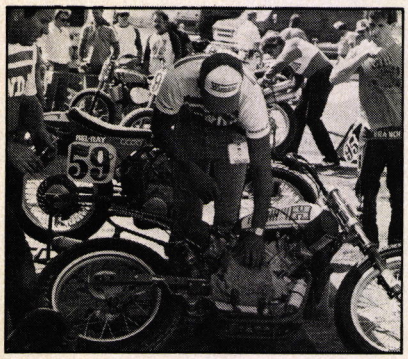
But the biggest problem he had in 1982 was mechanical failures. "At the last two national TTs—Santa Fe and Peoria—six motors broke underneath me," he said. That proved expensive, not only for Honda, but for Pearson as well, because he had won both of the previous two Peoria TTs, in 1980 and 1981.

Regardless of the nature of his equipment, though, Pearson was left stranded for '83. But he's a fighter, and rather than just rip the Honda patches from his leathers and ride *anybody's* equipment this year, he regrouped and gathered new sponsors, including Shoei, Supertrapp and Circle Bell Industries. Pic Manufacturing

will provide Pearson's primary support, in the form of three XR750s.

And to make certain Pearson's stable of bikes remains competitive, tuner Craig Fillmer was hired. As Pearson was quick to point out about his new tuner, "He's as hard a worker as I am a rider." Nor does Pearson lack confidence in himself. "There isn't one guy out there who's better than me," he said. "Maybe Jay (Springsteen) has more natural talent than anybody, but if I'm given good equipment, he ain't gonna beat me," he said.

Good equipment is, after all, half the battle. And with that, Pearson's story comes full-circle for the moment, because

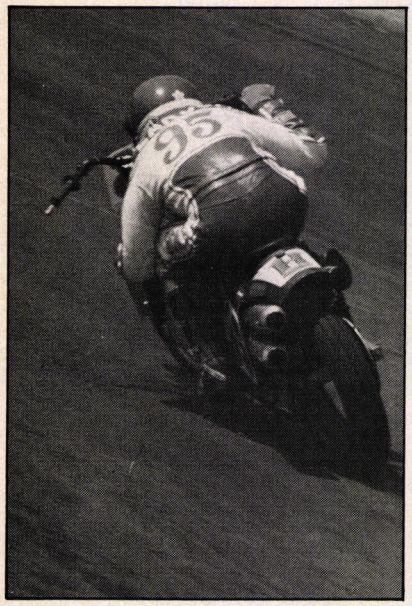


Honda NS750 on its side in the pits

The problem was reliability.

Honda hasn't forsaken him completely; he'll be provided with engines for his short-track and TT efforts. Evidently, Pearson's two Peoria wins and his victory on the Louisville Half-Mile still count for *something* with his former employer.

—Jerry Smith ●



Pearson all alone on a Honda

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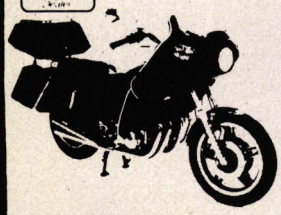

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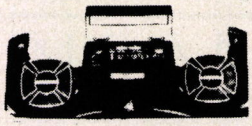

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LETTERS *More motolust, Trick numbers and Harley-D backlash.*

SHOWROOM BOUND

I thought the only 650cc machine I ever would want was one made in 1979—by Honda. But after reading the December issue of CYCLE GUIDE I'm trading it in for a new one, an '83-model Nighthawk. Honda 650s have their own special brand of speed and power that, to me at least, is what motorcycling is all about.

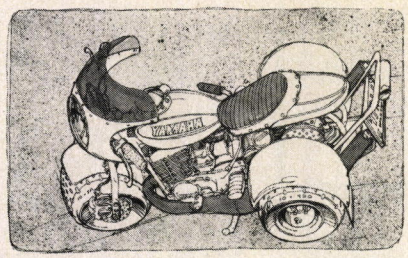
Dwight Hipp
New Medford, Connecticut

And now with limited maintenance, to boot—ed.

HE WISHES HE WERE

Judging by the letters you've received, my dreams were not the only ones shattered by Honda's decision not to bring the CBX400F into this country. The minute I laid eyes on that bike, I fell in love.

The '82 450cc Nighthawk I own is a good bike, but I want something a little sportier with better performance. Cycles in the higher-displacement categories—650cc and more—are just too much for me. That CBX400F looks like just what I need. I really do like Hondas, the company has a lot going for it and showed the



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competition that with its '83 lineup. I can only hope that Honda will have a change of heart for '84 and, with a good response, bring the CBX400F into this country.

Mike Mahery
Athens, Tennessee

And if the President agrees with the International Trade Commission, there's a good chance you'll see more 400s—ed.

THE BOTTOM-LINE SHOWDOWN

When all the '83s are available, how about having a showdown at the dragstrip? Square-off *all* the 750s and 1100s, at the same place, the same time and the same day and really see which ones are the quickest bikes for '83. Let's see if the manufacturers' claims can be backed up at the strip. I'll cheer on the Suzukis.

Ron Langowski
Winona, Minnesota

And we thought it was hard to position and evaluate just two or three bikes at a time—ed.

GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT

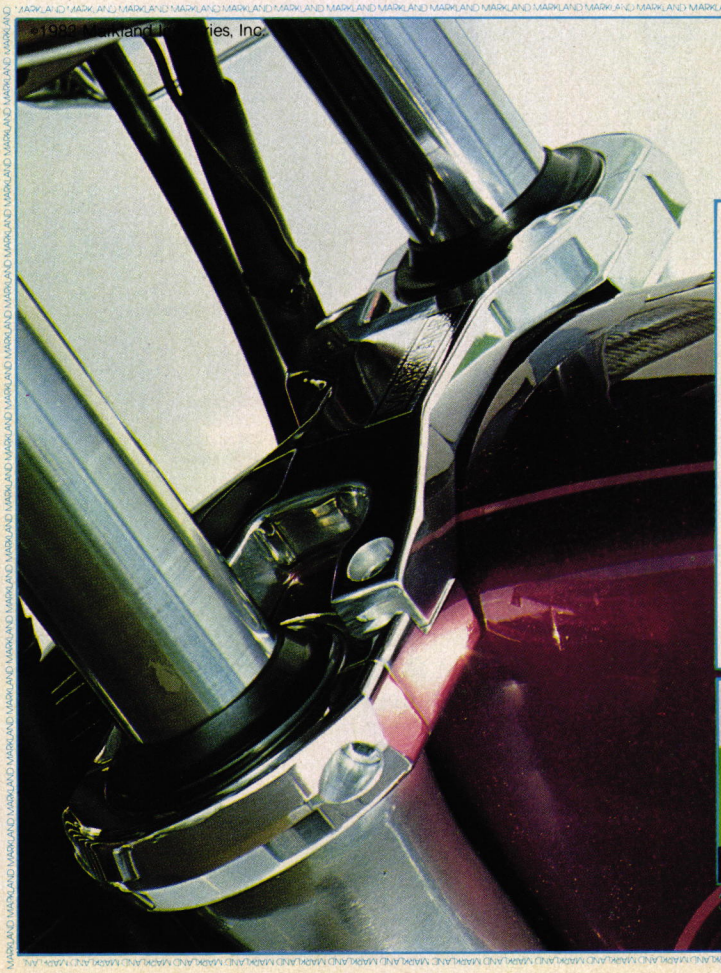
I thoroughly enjoyed the January issue, especially the column by Ted West and the Minitest of Kawasaki's KZ750-L3. A GPz clothed in the plain guise of a KZ interests me far more than the original GPz ever did. I find it heartening to see that the Japanese finally are offering in America sporting 750s with the traditionally European bar/seat/peg setup.

Eric Nye
APO, New York

TIMETABLES

Do the Japanese bike manufacturers have some sort of agreement among themselves not to outperform each other's hyperbike? The reason I ask relates to the CB1100F; Honda came out with this bike without, at least, matching its horsepower

Continued



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LETTERS

to the 1100R. This would have, most likely, put it a couple of tenths ahead of the competition. I realize they can't keep outdoing each other indefinitely, so what gives—are they taking turns?

Keith Thorberg
APO, New York

Don't you believe that for one tenth of a second. Quarter-mile times are extremely important to each manufacturer—and aggressively fought for—ed.

CHANGES IN LATITUDES

In the Guide Lines section of the December issue, I came across a couple of bothersome words. The description of Yamaha's '83 RD350LC, although otherwise excellent, labeled the bike as "forbidden fruit." That's not quite true, at least for us—the bike is as available as any others in the Yamaha shops. And just for the record, the bike dominates most of the production road racing up here, including the 750 class.

Ben Spencer
Toronto, Canada

Also for the record, we're still EPA regulated, and the RD350LC still is forbidden fruit—ed.

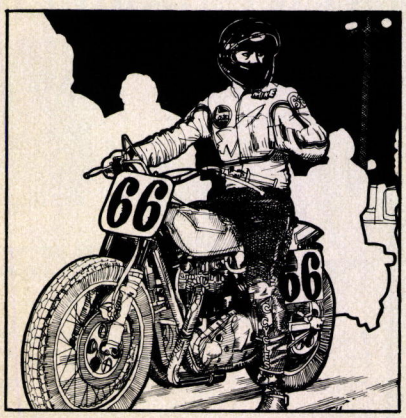
MISDIRECTED ENFORCEMENT

I was pleased to see the attention given to the problem of drinking and driving/riding in the February issue. Though you'd have to be some kind of a twit to ride a bike while intoxicated, my real fear is of some drunken fool drifting across the centerline in a two-and-a-half-ton Caddy and squashing me and my 650 like a bug.

As a former police officer, believe me when I say I'd much rather see the money and effort that's now spent enforcing a 55 mph speed limit on roads designed for 70 or 80 mph redirected to a problem that really needs attention—keeping drunks off the roads.

Doug Hooper
Binghampton, New York

That, Mr. Hooper, makes two of us—ed.



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UP TO THE EYEBALLS

I can withhold my ire no longer. As much an American as the next guy (I own an American standard-sized car and keep a few rifles in the house) and only a skip on the map from Milwaukee, I take strong issue with the idea that we who ride Japanese bikes do so only because we can't afford the price of a Harley-Davidson. I wouldn't own a Harley if it cost half of what my Suzuki did, which, by the way, is my third motorcycle.

Even in the short riding season of Wisconsin I still manage to put 8000-9000 miles a year on my bike, something I never could do on a machine that is less reliable or enjoyable. Like Paul Dean, I believe function is the most important attribute of a motorcycle and, for me, the current Harley-Davidsons just don't have it.

John Cresta
Waunakee, Wisconsin

THE CLASSIC APPROACH

As my riding distances became longer and longer (here in New Mexico that's not hard to do), the KZ750 I had really started eating me up. It was just too small for my 6-foot, 205-pound frame. I decided to check out all the larger bikes and go right to the top. I narrowed my choice down to Honda's Aspencade and a motorcycle that has been around for a few years, but one I have yet to read an in-depth test article on: the Harley-Davidson FLT Tour Glide Classic.

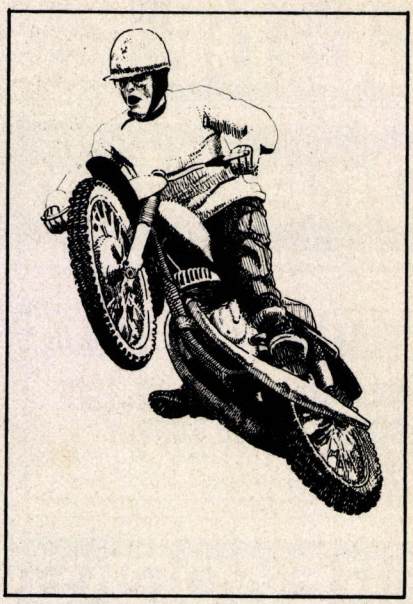
Ironically, one dealer had both bikes in his showroom. I rode them back-to-back and concluded that the Harley was *my* kind of machine; smooth, practically vibration-free at cruising speed, excellent fuel mileage (much better than the Honda) and I had room to stretch, move around and be comfortable. Harleys might not be for everyone, but this one is for me.

George Peterson
Elida, New Mexico

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?

Regarding your Letters column reply to Mr. Saffell in the February issue: If he's really looking for an unreliable machine to keep him in the garage, I suggest he forget about a '55 BSA.

My personal basket case is a 1955 BSA, given to me by a friend in exchange for some paint work and, I think, to get it out of his basement. True, I've spent my share of shoptime with this bike, but not as much as you might think. It took less than a year of spare time to assemble it properly and since then I've yet to experience any type of failure. With the single exception of the rear fender, every part needed



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to complete the rebuild was obtained locally. Amazing, considering that this is a 28-year-old machine, from a manufacturer that hasn't been in business for a decade.

Prior to this experience, I thought all those British bike nuts were lunatics who didn't know what they were missing. I've since come to the realization that they view the rest of the motorcycling community in much the same way. I understand now; in fact, I feel that I've been missing something all along.

John Friederichs
Seattle, Washington

Could that something be the smell of Castrol-R?—ed.

A SOLID OFFER

I just read the West's Side column in the February issue and I have to disagree. In fact, if Ted West has a week off this summer he can visit me. I'll let him sleep on my couch—for nothing. If he wants to ride dirt he can take my $15 DT-1 out for a thrashing, and for corner-carving I have a $200 RD400 I can put at his disposal. How does that sound?

George Baker
Greenfield, Massachusetts

Just right for Ted—ed.

ONE BETTER

Dear Mr. West: if you really want to tour Lahaina, Maui from the seat of a good-running 750 (or whatever), give me a call; I think we can arrange something.

Chuck Rose
Cycle City, Ltd.
Honolulu, Hawaii

Mr. West will be busy in Massachusetts. However, the rest of the staff is free—ed. ●

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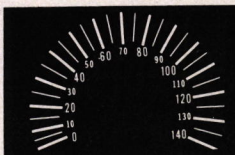

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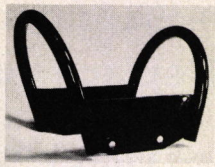

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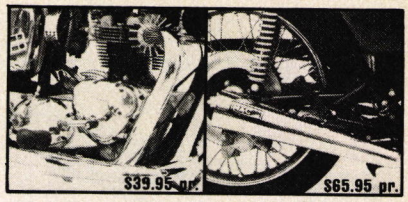

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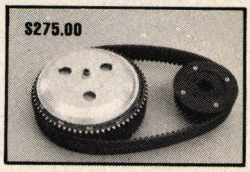

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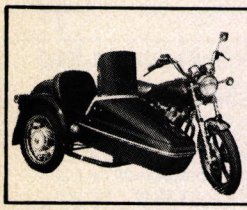

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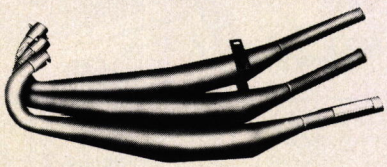

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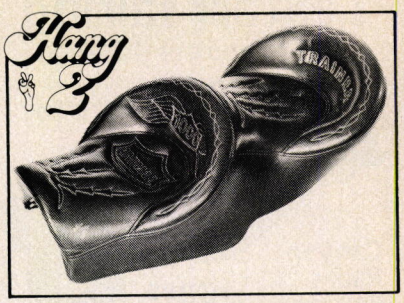

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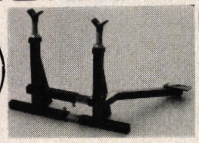

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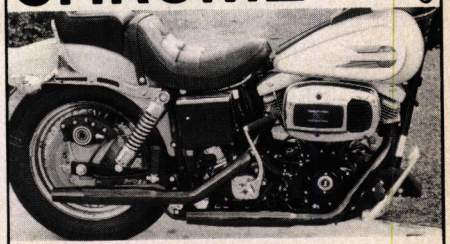

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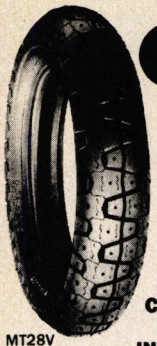

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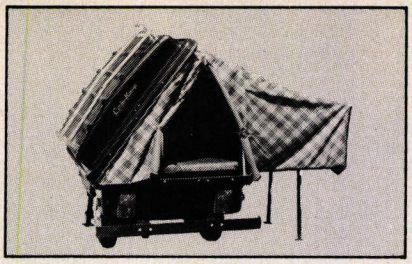

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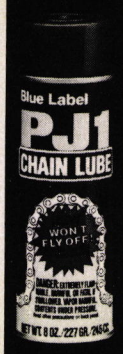

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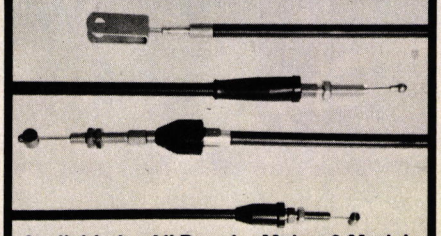

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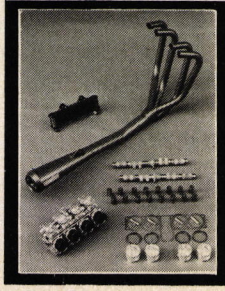

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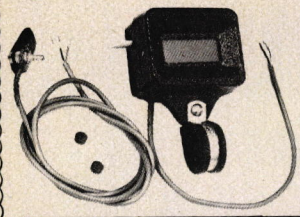

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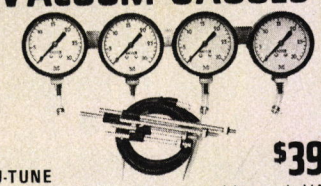

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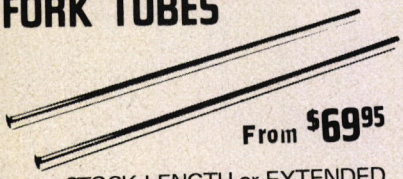

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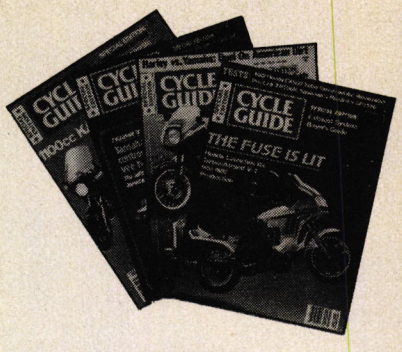

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As you can plainly see, Giugiaro has come up with another masterpiece. The Shoei Z-100.

What you can't see are the hours of wind tunnel testing that led to the air damming chin spoiler and superthick shield. A shield that can be opened to one of seven positions with the touch of a finger and closed just as easily. A shield that combines with a seamless mold rib to allow for a square view port and excellent peripheral vision.

The helmet shell itself is built from a combination of Kevlar and fiberglass, making it super-strong yet super-light-weight. Inside, there's a shock absorbing foam liner covered with a ribbed cloth that increases ventilation and keeps the rider cool.

The Shoei Z-100. Beautifully simple. Simply beautiful.

SHOEI®

Smoke shield optional.

RIDE A MOTORCYCLE THAT DIDN'T BREAK ANY SPEED RECORDS ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE.

Today, there are any number of motorcycles that will rocket through the quarter-mile straightaway in 13 seconds. Or less.

All the more reason to consider how fast these same machines are rocketing through the factory. A statistic not furnished by virtually any motorcycle manufacturer except BMW, and for good reason:

For each motorcycle BMW carefully builds, Suzuki, for example, whisks out 48. Yamaha, 70. And Honda, an eyebrow-raising 96.

Eyebrow-raising, at least, to the BMW engineers. Who have long believed that mass production leads to mass compromise.

And whose predilection for hand craftsmanship and meticulous engineering has led to machines that "retain their taut, solid feel when lesser motorcycles have long since gotten loose and rattly" (Cycle).

Machines like the $6,590 R100RS.* A sport tourer that holds virtually every long-distance speed record in the 1000cc class.

But one which is far less likely to speed into disrepair.

So unlikely, in fact, that BMW's limited warranty against defects in workmanship and materials covers our machines for 3 years and an unlimited number of miles.**

Or, in other words, for 3 times longer than that of almost any other motorcycle on the road today.

THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

BMW

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price. Actual price will depend upon dealer. Price excludes applicable state and local taxes, shipping and destination charges. ** Warranty applies to motorcycles purchased from authorized U.S. dealers and BMW European Delivery only and is transferable within the period specified. See your BMW dealer for details. © 1983 BMW of North America, Inc. The BMW trademark and logo are registered.